



PRESS RELEASE

Colorado Department of Law
Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman

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COLORADO ATTORNEY GENERAL CYNTHIA H. COFFMAN, DEA, DENVER POLICE, AND WEST METRO DRUG TASK FORCE PARTNER TO DISMANTLE MAJOR HEROIN TRAFFICKING RING IN DENVER METRO AREA

Operation Muchas Pacas has netted 47 pounds of Mexican heroin valued at \$2.2 million

DENVER—Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman, in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Denver Police Department (DPD), and the West Metro Drug Task Force, today announced the dismantling of a major heroin trafficking organization focused in Colorado. Operation Muchas Pacas, which launched in August 2015, has resulted in 25 indictments, the seizure of 47 pounds of Mexican heroin, with a total street value of \$2.2 million, and over 1 pound of cocaine valued at \$30,000.

“Stopping the flow and sale of dangerous drugs in Colorado is a major priority of this office” said Attorney General Coffman. “This case was a great example of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies working together to dismantle an international drug trafficking network, and I thank the DEA, DPD, and the West Metro Drug Task Force for their work to keep our state safe.”

The Denver Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Strike Force headed the law enforcement investigation in partnership with Denver Police Department and the West Metro Drug Task Force that led to the state-level indictment of 25 individuals charged with participating in an international drug trafficking network that transported heroin from Mexico through Arizona into Colorado. The organization was based in the Denver metropolitan area. The DEA Strike Force investigation included agents and officers from DEA, Denver Police Department, West Metro Drug Task Force, FBI, HSI, IRS, US Marshall’s Office, Colorado State Patrol, Aurora Police Department, and Northern Colorado Drug Task Force.

“Opioid abuse is at epidemic proportions throughout the country” stated Barbra Roach, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration’s Denver

Field Division. “The heroin seized in this OCDETF Strike Force operation was produced in Mexico and was destined to ruin lives and communities in the State of Colorado. The criminals that would have benefited from this will now be held accountable and pay for their actions. The law enforcement agencies of Colorado did a tremendous job in working together in Operation Muchas Pacas to attack and dismantle this criminal organization which preyed on our communities.”

In total, the investigation has netted:

- 47 pounds of brown heroin, with a street value of \$2.2 million
- \$218,712 in drug proceeds
- 1.4 pounds of cocaine with a street value of \$30,000
- 3 vehicles worth approximately \$20,000
- 11 firearms (seven handguns-one stolen, three assault rifles, one shotgun)

During the investigation, the task force executed 17 search warrants within Colorado and 17 arrest warrants in Colorado, Arizona and California.

“The Denver Police Department and the organizations involved in Operation Muchas Pacas want drug dealers to know that selling drugs in our city, state, and country is not tolerated and will be dealt with in a swift and accountable manner,” said Denver Police Chief Robert C. White. “Dismantling this heroin ring is one giant step in reducing the supply of illegal narcotics to our streets.”

Through the use of court-authorized wiretap intercepts, investigators discovered that this group was importing large quantities of heroin from various sources from the Republic of Mexico into Colorado and then distributing the heroin to local customers throughout the Denver Metro area. The group used a variety of methods to import the heroin, including concealing the drugs in the spare tires of load vehicles and in Fed Ex packages. The group also used a variety of methods to transfer the earned drug proceeds back to the sources of supply in the Republic of Mexico, including concealing bulk currency in load vehicles and wire remittances.

On July 7, 2016, and August 11, 2016, the Colorado Statewide Grand Jury returned indictments relating to this heroin trafficking group. The filing of criminal charges or an indictment is merely a formal accusation that an individual committed a crime. Each defendant should be presumed innocent until proven guilty. The criminal matters have been venued in Douglas County, and will be prosecuted by the District Attorney’s Office for the 18th Judicial District in partnership with the Attorney General’s Office.

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