



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eric G. Olshan
Western District of Pennsylvania

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Thirty-Five Individuals Charged in Second Superseding Indictment with Participating in Violent Transnational Drug and Money Laundering Operation

Two Defendants Charged Under the Federal Kingpin Statute

JOHNSTOWN, Pa. – Thirty-five individuals have been indicted by a federal grand jury in Johnstown on narcotics, conspiracy, and money laundering charges, United States Attorney Eric G. Olshan announced today. The four-count Second Superseding Indictment was returned on December 13, 2023, and unsealed today.

The Second Superseding Indictment charges a total of 35 defendants. Thirty-three defendants allegedly participated in a domestic and international narcotics conspiracy between August 2021 and June 2023, involving substantial quantities of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and cocaine. Two defendants are charged with being principal administrators of a continuing criminal enterprise, an alleged violation of the federal “Kingpin” statute. Eight of the defendants are further charged with a money laundering conspiracy. A list of the defendants, charges, and maximum penalties is included at the bottom of this release.

According to the Second Superseding Indictment, two of the defendants, Marcos Monarrez-Mendoza and Marcos Monarrez, Jr., allegedly served as the leaders of the Phoenix-based Monarrez Drug Trafficking Organization (the “Monarrez DTO”), which imported from Mexico millions of fentanyl pills, kilograms of fentanyl powder, hundreds of pounds of methamphetamine, and dozens of kilograms of cocaine that were distributed and sold throughout the United States. The narcotics allegedly were smuggled into the United States inside bulk shipping containers and hidden within commercial consumer products, among other methods. At various times, other defendants, including Jaime Ledesma, Henry Rivera Ortega, and Jesus Miguel Vibanco-Garcia, allegedly served as the suppliers of substantial quantities of narcotics for the Monarrez DTO. Redistributors then sold these drugs throughout the United States, including in Phoenix, Arizona; Seattle, Washington; Wichita, Kansas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Cleveland, Ohio; Fort Wayne, Indiana; and Western Pennsylvania, among other destinations.

As alleged in the Superseding Indictment, Monarrez-Mendoza and Monarrez, Jr. issued payment through various forms and by various means to the organization’s drug suppliers for the drug shipments. For example, Monarrez-Mendoza and Monarrez, Jr. allegedly issued payments to Humberto Arredondo-Soto, a narcotics supplier based in Mexico, in the form of hundreds of thousands of dollars in bulk U.S. currency; military-grade firearms, including .50 caliber, AK-47, and short-stock AK-47 (Draco) rifles; Glock handguns; FN SCAR assault rifles; and vehicles,

which were smuggled from the United States into Mexico by way of couriers.

While orchestrating this transnational drug trafficking organization, Monarrez, Jr. allegedly offered to pay and did pay defendant Carlos Zamora to perpetrate violence, including a drive-by shooting, on behalf of the Monarrez DTO. Throughout the duration of the conspiracy, members of the Monarrez DTO are alleged to have regularly possessed and carried firearms to protect the DTO's drugs and drug proceeds.

Additionally, while detained at the Cambria County Prison in the Western District of Pennsylvania, members of the conspiracy, including Monarrez, Jr., allegedly used contraband cell phones to communicate with other co-conspirators outside of the jail facility in an effort to direct the continued operations of the Monarrez DTO. Specifically, during this time, Monarrez, Jr. allegedly coordinated the distribution of approximately 500,000 fentanyl pills and kilogram-quantities of fentanyl powder throughout the United States. As alleged, Monarrez-Mendoza and Monarrez, Jr. were the principal administrators, organizers, and leaders of the alleged Monarrez DTO, which involved a total of 120 kilograms or more of fentanyl and 150 kilograms or more of methamphetamine.

“Marcos Monarrez-Mendoza and his son Marcos Monarrez, Jr., along with their many co-conspirators, allegedly operated a violent drug trafficking operation that smuggled massive quantities of deadly drugs from Mexico, including millions of fentanyl pills, into the United States for distribution on the streets of our communities in the Western District of Pennsylvania, as well as many other communities throughout the country,” said U.S. Attorney Olshan. “The latest charges in this case are a direct result of the dedication and ceaseless resolve of the prosecutors in our office, who, alongside our many dedicated federal, state, and local investigative partners, will continue to do everything in our collective power to shut down deadly narcotics traffickers—even when, as alleged, they seek to ply their criminal trade from inside the walls of a jail.”

“The trafficking of fentanyl to our region from other states is a huge problem,” said FBI Pittsburgh Acting Special Agent in Charge Mike Shanahan. “FBI Pittsburgh's Southwest Safe Streets Task Force and our partners are working very hard to take dangerous drugs off of our streets, along with the people who peddle them. This is another great example of law enforcement working together to combat the drug crisis and make our communities safer by targeting those trying to do harm.”

“These indictments demonstrate HSI's commitment to cooperation and information sharing with our partner law enforcement agencies. Every time we dismantle one of these criminal enterprises, we help protect the American public from the devastation brought by addiction and the crime and violence that goes along with it,” said Special Agent in Charge of HSI Philadelphia William S. Walker. “These charges carry with them the possibility of life sentences. Given the unparalleled devastation that fentanyl has caused, these superseding indictments send the message to those who deal death that they will be caught and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

A total of eight defendants are also charged with engaging in a money laundering conspiracy from April 2022 to March 2023 related to the operations of the Monarrez DTO. According to the Second Superseding Indictment, Monarrez-Mendoza and Monarrez, Jr. enlisted

the assistance of associates located both in the United States and in Mexico, as well as the family members of their associates, to transport cash proceeds of the Monarrez DTO and engage in various financial transactions designed to legitimize their profits; disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, and control of the proceeds; and promote the Monarrez DTO. This conduct allegedly involved the transportation and delivery of bulk cash proceeds from drug sales to couriers for transportation from the United States to Mexico; the use of digital money transfer services; casino gaming; and the purchase of jewelry, watches, designer clothing, high-end vehicles, and real property, which were often purchased by and titled in the names of third parties to conceal the identities of their true owners.

Under the federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed would be based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the prior criminal history, if any, of the defendants.

Assistant United States Attorney Arnold P. Bernard, Jr. is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

This prosecution is the result of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles high-level drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that threaten communities throughout the United States by using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach that leverages the strengths of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies against criminal networks.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laurel Highlands Resident Agency, Homeland Security Investigations, and the FBI's Southwest Pennsylvania Safe Streets Task Force conducted the investigation leading to the Superseding Indictment in this case. Additional agencies participating in this investigation include the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation; the United States Postal Inspection Service; Cambria County, Indiana County, and Westmoreland County District Attorney's Offices and detective bureaus; the Cambria County Sheriff's Office; Indiana Borough Police; New Kensington Police; Upper Yoder Township Police; Cambria Township Police; the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General; Pennsylvania State Police; and numerous other local law enforcement agencies.

A superseding indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

List of Defendants

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
Marcos Monarrez-Mendoza	53	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
			Engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise	Life imprisonment
			Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Samuel Aguirre	21	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
			Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Marco Armenta	22	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Mark Camacho	24	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
			substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	
Robert Foster	25	Buckeye, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Donald Garwood	40	Glendale, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Erivan Guerrero	22	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
			Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Bryce Hill	25	Kennewick, WA	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Emmanuel Lopez	27	Glendale, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
			kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	
Cesar Monarrez	25	Maricopa, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Marcos Monarrez, Jr.	23	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
			Engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise	Life imprisonment
			Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Jairo Morales	21	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
			substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	
			Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Stephanie Ortiz	24	Avondale, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Valerie Sanchez	35	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Heaven West	21	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Carlos Zamora	27	Peoria, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Humberto Arredondo-Soto	23	Culiacan, Mexico	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
			kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	
Colby Barrow	29	Peoria, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Luis Chavez-Ortega	26	Glendale, AZ	Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Donnell Collins	27	Cleveland, OH	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine	Life imprisonment
			Possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine	40 years' imprisonment
Mohamed Kariye	34	Kent, WA	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Jesus Lopez	21	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
Diego Monarrez	21	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Alicia Parks	24	Kent, WA	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
James Pinkston	32	New Kensington, PA	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine	Life imprisonment
			Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
			Possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine	40 years' imprisonment
Jesus Ramirez	25	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
			amount of methamphetamine	
Sahal Sahal	36	SeaTac, WA	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Diamond Williams-Dorsey	29	Cleveland, OH	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl	Life imprisonment
Luis Carlos Fentanes	22	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine	Life imprisonment
Jesus Aaron Garcia	24	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Jaime Ledesma	26	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Henry Rivera Ortega	20	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture	Life imprisonment

Name	Age	Place of Residence	Charges	Maximum Penalty
			and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	
Adrian Lopez Rivera	22	Phoenix, AZ	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment
Michele Soto	20	Phoenix, AZ	Money laundering conspiracy	20 years' imprisonment
Jesus Miguel Vibanco-Garcia	28	Mexico	Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine, 400 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of fentanyl, and 500 grams or more of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine	Life imprisonment

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