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MARYSVILLE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A FIREARM AND POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE METHAMPHETAMINE

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that RAUL ORTIZ VERA, 31, of Marysville, California pleaded guilty this morning to two felony offenses before United States District Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and its Safe Streets Task Force, comprised of the Marysville Police Department, the NET-5 Drug Task Force of Northern California, the Yuba County Sheriff's office, and other local law enforcement in and around Yuba County.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, VERA was traveling by car through Marysville on Thursday, January 4, 2007, when a uniformed Marysville Police Officer driving a marked police vehicle noticed VERA's vehicle bore expired license plates. VERA was later contacted by the uniformed officer and, at that time, falsely identified himself. After VERA's false identification was discovered, the uniformed officer tried to arrest VERA. VERA resisted arrest and attempted to flee. After a foot pursuit and struggle, VERA was successfully arrested. During his struggle with arresting officers, VERA -- from his waistband -- attempted to reach his loaded pistol. A bag of VERA's methamphetamine was found on his person and VERA attempted to discard another bag of methamphetamine during his flight. VERA has a prior California state conviction for possession of a sawed off shotgun. VERA pleaded guilty today to being a felon in possession of a firearm and to possession of over 50 grams of a mixture of methamphetamine with intent to distribute the drug.

VERA is scheduled to be sentenced in Sacramento on Friday, June 8, 2007, at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Burrell. He faces a maximum of 40 years in prison for the drug distribution charge and up to 10 years in prison for the firearm charge. VERA's actual sentence will be determined under the United States Sentencing Guidelines, however, the drug distribution offense carries a mandatory minimum sentence of at least 5 years in federal prison. VERA is not a citizen, and will be subject to deportation after completion of his federal prison sentence. VERA was remanded into custody after entry of his guilty pleas.

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