



# Department of Justice

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## **18 INDICTED IN HEROIN CONSPIRACY**

COLUMBUS -- Teams of federal, state and local law enforcement agents today began arresting 18 people charged in a federal indictment with distributing heroin in central Ohio following a six-month investigation. A list of defendants and the charges they face is attached.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Anthony Marotta, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes; Madison County Sheriff James P. Sabin; Fayette County Sheriff Vernon P. Stanforth; and Grove City Police Chief Joseph Wise announced the arrests today.

A federal grand jury in Columbus returned the indictment on February 24, 2009. It was unsealed following the arrests. Teams of law enforcement agents also executed search warrants at 11 locations in Franklin County in connection with the investigation.

The investigation centered around a Mexican restaurant, El Cora, located on West Broad Street in Columbus. The restaurant owner, David Gonzalez Rendon, of Hilliard, is charged with conspiracy and possession with intent to distribute heroin.

All 18 defendants are charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute heroin, which is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment. Seven of the defendants are charged with possession with intent to distribute more than 100 grams of heroin. This crime is punishable by at least five and up to 40 years imprisonment.

The case was investigated under the auspices of the South Central Ohio HIDTA's Southwest Border Task Force comprising investigators from: DEA, the Fairfield Hocking Major Crimes Unit; Franklin County Sheriff's Office; Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division; and the Grove City Police Department. The Delaware County Sheriff's Office and Columbus Police SWAT teams also participated in the arrests.

The U.S. Marshals Service coordinated the transportation of those arrested.

Defendants will have initial appearances in U.S. District Court here today.

An indictment is merely an accusation. All defendants should be presumed innocent until and unless the government proves their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

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