



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DOMINICAN REPUBLICAN TO SPEND 30 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR COCAINE

(Tyler, Texas) A 44-year-old Dominican Republic national convicted of cocaine distribution, has been sentenced to 360 months in federal prison. **SERAFIN ARECHE** a.k.a. Moreno, was sentenced today by Judge Leonard Davis. Areche had been convicted of Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Cocaine and Distribution of More than 50 Kilograms of Cocaine after a two day trial in January. Co-defendant, **HUGO QUEVEDO** was sentenced to 168 months in federal prison. Quevedo pleaded guilty to Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Cocaine in January, 2004.

According to information prosecutors presented in court, Areche was arrested last November after an investigation which began with a traffic stop in Panola County. Authorities seized 21 kilograms of cocaine in Carthage on U.S. 59 and another 21 kilograms were seized in Houston in the on-going investigation. Areche was arrested in Houston when he was lured out of his native Dominican Republic to distribute more cocaine to other co-conspirators. Testimony at trial showed that Areche was a source of large quantities of cocaine in Houston, had received over

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\$1,000,000 and was involved in the distribution of almost 1/8 ton of cocaine from South America in a three month period.

U.S. Attorney Matthew D. Orwig believes the sentence sends a powerful message to drug suppliers, "Distributing cocaine through the Eastern District of Texas will get you hard time in a federal prison. No pardon, no parol, just 30 years to ponder the real cost of dealing drugs."

Areche was also sentenced to 5 years supervised release and a \$ 2,000,000 fine for both counts.

Officer Shawn Pardazi with the Northeast Texas Narcotics Task Force investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Baldwin prosecuted the case.

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