



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

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BELIZE NATIONAL ADMITS TO FAKE VIAGRA SCHEME

(Sherman, Texas) A 25-year-old citizen of Belize has pleaded guilty to fraudulently introducing misbranded drugs into interstate commerce. **LUIS ROMERO URBINA** entered a plea of guilty yesterday before United States District Judge Marcia Crone.

According to evidence presented by prosecutors, Urbina operated a business named "Black Mantar Productions" in Orange Walk, Belize. An undercover investigation conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was underway in which investigators were purchasing counterfeit shoes and electronics from Urbina. During the course of the investigation, Urbina advised the undercover agents that he had acquired a source for counterfeit pharmaceuticals. Over several months, agents purchased over 9,000 counterfeit "Viagra" tablets. The tablets were shipped to addresses in Houston and Beaumont. The investigation culminated on March 4, 2004, when agents received a shipment of 8,000 tablets concealed in a microwave oven. After this shipment, Urbina was arrested in Beaumont. Urbina has been detained since his arrest. In addition to Viagra, Urbina claimed that he could also provide bulk quantities of other counterfeit prescription drugs such as Lipitor (used to treat high blood pressure), Lupron (to treat cancer), and Vicodin (for pain relief).

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Matthew D. Orwig, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, praised the work of the ICE agents for their investigation, "Counterfeit drugs can be extremely dangerous. These agents are to be commended for their extraordinary efforts to remove this danger from our community."

Urbina faces a maximum sentence of three years in prison and a fine \$10,000 fine. A sentencing date has not been set.

The case is being investigated by the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Houston Division, and the United States Food and Drug Administration. Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Hobbs is prosecuting the case.

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