



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

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Twenty-Five Tri-City Bombers Gang Members and Associates Indicted on Federal Racketeering, Drug Distribution and Money Laundering Charges

A grand jury sitting in Houston returned a 27-count superseding indictment against 25 Tri-City Bombers (TCB) gang members and associates in a conspiracy involving racketeering, drug distribution, money laundering, robbery and discharge of a firearm resulting in death.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Blanco of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, Acting U.S. Attorney Abe Martinez of the Southern District of Texas, Special Agent in Charge Christopher Combs of the FBI's San Antonio Field Office and Special Agent in Charge D. Richard Goss of IRS - Criminal Investigation's (CI) Houston Field Office made the announcement.

A 27-count superseding indictment was returned by a grand jury on March 30, 2017, and unsealed in its entirety yesterday in the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Texas.

According to court documents, the TCB is a national gang active in multiple states that was formed in the early 1980s in the Pharr, San Juan and Alamo areas of South Texas. TCB has an organized decision-making hierarchy, including a person in charge of each city, and leaders within the organization who determined whether its members violated the gang's rule and deserved punishment. To instill loyalty, including participation in gang's criminal activities and adherence to its strict rule structure, TCB leaders determined and ordered the severe beating of members and associates for acts of disobedience or non-observance of the TCB's rules.

The scope of the TCB's crimes is wide-ranging and consistent in its nationwide operation. The RICO conspiracy charged here includes murder, attempted murder, drug trafficking, firearms crimes, money laundering and other crimes in furtherance of the

organization's enterprise. In Texas, for example, the TCB brought money into the gang through drug trafficking, home invasion robberies and money laundering.

The indictment alleges that from January 2009 and continuing through March 2017, TCB members and associates engaged in a variety of racketeering activities, including murder, attempted murder, robbery and drug trafficking. TCB members and associates allegedly coordinated the transportation and sale of cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine and heroin from South Texas to Atlanta, Georgia, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, St. Louis, Missouri, and other cities nationwide. The indictment also alleges that TCB members committed a home invasion robbery for the purpose of stealing controlled substances, during which the home owner was shot to death.

The 19 defendants charged for their alleged roles in the RICO conspiracy are Mike Bueno, aka Mocho, 45, of Edinburg/Alamo, Texas; Eduardo Hernandez, aka Lepo, 36, of Donna, Texas; Arturo Ramirez Jr., aka China, 41, of Weslaco/San Juan, Texas; Jose Rolando Gonzalez, aka Rollie, 38, of Alton, Texas; Ernesto Alonzo Ruiz, aka Gallito, 38, of Raymondville, Texas; Hipolito Gonzalez, aka Pollie, 34, of Mission, Texas; Israel Gonzalez, aka Rayo, 34, of Pharr, Texas; Rolando Cruz, aka Party, 45, of Edinburg/Mission, Texas; Jesus Silva, aka Bola, 42, of San Juan, Texas; Luis Antonio Saldivar, aka Flaco, 25, of Mission, Texas; Octavio Muniz, aka Tavo, 40, of Pharr/Edinburg, Texas; Joseph Alberto Lopez, 33, of Donna, Texas; Margil Reyna, Jr., aka Mikeo, 32, formerly of Alamo, Texas, now of Toledo, Ohio; Joshua Omar Santillan, 35, of Donna, Texas; Roberto Cortez, aka Robe, 35, of Pharr/San Juan, Texas; Rene Vela, aka Gordo, 47, of Edinburg/McAllen, Texas; Carlos de la Rosa, aka Charlie, 40, of San Juan, Texas, Ernesto Saenz, aka Tuerto, 26, of McAllen, Texas; and Luis Alberto Tello, aka Wicho, 36, of Mercedes, Texas.

The superseding indictment also charges conspiracies to distribute cocaine, marijuana and methamphetamine, money laundering conspiracy, robbery, discharge of a firearm in the course of a violent crime resulting in death, and multiple instances of possession of controlled substances with the intent to distribute. Multiple racketeering conspiracy defendants are charged with each of these offenses. In addition, Daniel Saenz, 32, of Donna, Texas, is charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine. De la Rosa; Ricardo Ortega, 34, of Edinburg, Texas; and Veronica Chavez, 38, of Mesquite/Brownsville, Texas, are charged with conspiracy to distribute marijuana and possession with intent to distribute marijuana. Ivan Rodriguez, 33, of McAllen, Texas, and Ciro Moya, 39, of Olivia, Minnesota, are charged with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. Roberto Reyes, aka Pelon, 31, of Pharr, Texas, is charged with possession with intent to distribute cocaine.

The charges and allegations in the indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The FBI and IRS-CI are investigating the case along with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Customs and Border Protection, Texas Alcoholic Beverage

Commission, Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office and police departments in McAllen, Mission, Edinburg, Weslaco and Pharr, Texas.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Anibal J. Alaniz and Casey N. MacDonald of the Southern District of Texas and Trial Attorney Catherine K. Dick of the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Gang Section are prosecuting the case.

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