



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Texas

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former Law Enforcement Official Convicted of Drug Trafficking

McALLEN, Texas – A jury has found a former Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) task force officer/Mission Police Department investigator guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and possession with intent to distribute cocaine, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth Magidson. The federal jury sitting in McAllen convicted Hector Mendez, 46, this afternoon following a six-day trial and approximately three hours of deliberation.

During trial, the jury heard that Mendez conspired to steal approximately 14.9 kilograms of cocaine and stage a seizure of sham, or diluted cocaine, to cover the theft.

On July 25, 2012, Reynol Chapa, 42, of Mission, had received a quantity of cocaine at a residence in Mission. Shortly thereafter, Mendez arrived at Chapa's residence and collected the bundles of cocaine. Mendez and Chapa had agreed the cocaine would be diluted or cut, then repackaged and staged for a seizure sometime later. The remaining cocaine would then be sold.

On July 28, 2012, a Ford Taurus was staged with the diluted bundles of cocaine in Mission. Mendez and other Mission Police Department officers seized the Taurus and drugs. Chapa made recorded calls to the person who had originally provided the drugs to conceal the fact that the cocaine had been cut and make it seem the bundles had been seized by law enforcement during the supposed transport.

Testimony of witnesses established that Mendez intentionally concealed facts about the seizure in DEA reports and statements to federal prosecutors, presented false statements to multiple judges in sworn court filings and intentionally altered transcripts of recorded calls in evidence.

U.S. District Judge Randy Crane presided over the trial and set sentencing for Sept. 27, 2016. At that time, Mendez faces no less than 10 and up to life on each count of conviction. Mendez was remanded to custody pending that hearing.

Chapa pleaded guilty and is set for sentencing Aug. 9, 2016.

The FBI, Department of Justice - Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Homeland Security – OIG and the DEA conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorneys James H. Sturgis and Kristen J. Rees prosecuted the case.