



Drug Enforcement Administration
LOS ANGELES FIELD DIVISION
Matthew Allen, Special Agent in Charge
www.dea.gov
Twitter/X: @DEALOSANGELES

Date: April 24, 2024
Contact: Rosa Valle-Lopez
Public Affairs Specialist (PIO)
(571) 387-5045
(310) 863-5124

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Operation “Hotline Bling” disrupts Sinaloa Cartel cell in the IE Culminates in 15 arrests, large fentanyl and methamphetamine seizures Enough fentanyl to produce 10 million lethal doses

LOS ANGELES – The Drug Enforcement Administration Los Angeles Field Division today announced the results of a multi-agency investigation targeting a Sinaloa drug trafficking network operating within the Inland Empire. Operation “Hotline Bling,” which started in early 2023, culminated last week with 15 arrests and significant drug seizures, including methamphetamine and quantities of fentanyl that potentially could produce 10 million lethal doses.

In March 2023, the Drug Enforcement Administration Riverside District Office and the Riverside Police Department, with assistance from the United States Postal Inspection Service, initiated Operation “Hotline Bling.” During the investigation, agents seized a total of approximately 376 pounds of methamphetamine, 37.4 pounds of fentanyl, 600,000 fentanyl tablets, 1.4 kilograms of cocaine, and seven firearms. The drugs seized in this investigation have an estimated “street value” of \$16 million.

The investigation culminated in three federal indictments that charge a total of six defendants and the issuance of 16 state arrest warrants. During the course of the investigation, agents developed information regarding a corrupt Riverside County Correctional Deputy. The DEA and Riverside Police provided investigative leads to the Riverside County Sheriff Department, ultimately assisting in the arrest of the deputy while he was in possession of 104 pounds of fentanyl pills.

Fentanyl is the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45; a single two-milligram dose can be fatal. It is estimated that this investigation prevented the distribution of more than 10 million potentially lethal doses of fentanyl within the Inland Empire and throughout the United States.

Matthew Allen, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Los Angeles Field Division, commended DEA RDO agents, Riverside Police and all partners involved in Operation Hotline Bling. “The steadfast collaboration, determination and long hours poured into this operation speak to the vehemence of our

investigators and partners. We are committed to keeping dangerous drugs off our streets and are intent on holding all substance laws violators accountable,” said Allen.

“We will continue leveraging every available resource to disrupt drug distribution trying to make its way into our Riverside neighborhoods,” stated Riverside Police Chief Larry Gonzalez. “Our collaboration with the DEA is not just about enforcement, but it’s about safeguarding the future of our community and ensuring that Riverside remains a safe and thriving place for people to live, work, and raise families.”

“As fentanyl and methamphetamine continue to ravage our communities, we will continue to target drug trafficking organizations that put profit over people’s lives,” said United States Attorney Martin Estrada. “The indictment filed by my office alleges that three men shipped kilogram-quantity parcels of narcotics through the United States Postal Service. Those who traffic in dangerous narcotics must be held accountable.”

Defendant Edwin Michael Alva, age 31 of San Jacinto, made a court appearance on April 19, 2024. Alva was given bond. However, due to a Riverside County narcotics warrant, Alva was detained and transported to the Riverside County Sheriff’s Department. Defendant Christopher Antonio Arreola-Alvarado, age 25 of Perris, is in the custody of the U.S. Marshall Service and is awaiting transport from the Eastern District of California to the Central District of California. Defendant Jose Javier Raya Cortez, age 21 of Perris, was charged by the State of California in Riverside County for violations of the California Health and Safety Code; he was also federally charged in the District of Delaware; he is currently detained, pending extradition to Delaware.

The multi-jurisdictional investigation was conducted by the DEA Riverside District Office, the Riverside Police Department, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, with assistance from DEA Wilmington District Office, DEA San Diego Field Division Narcotics Task Force, DEA San Jose District Office, and DEA Special Operations Division.

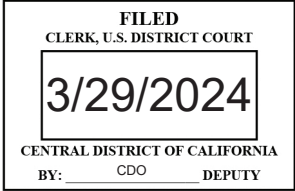
###



OPERATION “HOTLINE BLING” ARRESTS



NAME	AGE	CHARGES
Jose Javier RayaCortez	21-years-old	Federal Warrant, 11351 H&S, 11352 (a) H&S, 11378 H&S, and 11379 (a) H&S
Cesar Noe RayaCortez	23-years-old	11351 H&S and 11352 (a) H&S
Alexis Raeleen Trevino	26-years-old	11351 H&S, 11370.4 (a)(1) H&S, 11352 (a) H&S, and 273a(a) PC
Michael Edwin Alva	31-years-old	Federal Warrant, 11351 H&S, 11370.4 (a)(1) H&S, and 11352 (a) H&S
Julio Cesar Maganafranco Jr.	23-years-old	11351 H&S, 11370.4 (a)(1) H&S, 11352 (a) H&S
Cristopher Antonio ArreolaAlvarado	25-years-old	Federal Warrant 11351 H&S and 11370.4 (a)(1) H&S
Andrew Aguilar	27-years-old	11351 H&S and 11352 (a) H&S
Mario Daniel MirandaDuarte	33-years-old	11378 H&S, 11379 (a) H&S, and 11370.4 (b)(4) H&S
Rolando Claros	31-years-old	11378 H&S, 11379 (a) H&S, and 11370.4 (b)(4) H&S
Herman Leon	34-years-old	11351 H&S
Carlos Ninoarias	25-years-old	11378 H&S and 11379 (a) H&S
David Crosthwaite	24-years-old	11378 H&S and 11379 (a) H&S



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

January 2024 Grand Jury

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA,
EDWIN MICHAEL ALVA, and
CHRISTOPHER ARREOLA ALVARADO,
aka "Mario Cornejo Martinez,"

Defendants.

ED CR No. 5:24-cr-00081-KK

I N D I C T M E N T

[21 U.S.C. § 846: Conspiracy to Distribute Fentanyl; 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(A)(vi), (b)(1)(A)(viii): Distribution of Fentanyl and Methamphetamine; 21 U.S.C. § 853, 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c): Criminal Forfeiture]

The Grand Jury charges:

COUNT ONE

[18 U.S.C. § 846]

[ALL DEFENDANTS]

A. OBJECT OF THE CONSPIRACY

Beginning on an unknown date, but no later than in or around April 2023, and continuing until at least on or about July 26, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendants GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA, EDWIN MICHAEL ALVA, and CHRISTOPHER ARREOLA ALVARADO, also known as "Mario Cornejo Martinez," conspired with each other and with others known and unknown to the

1 Grand Jury to knowingly and intentionally distribute at least 400
2 grams of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of N-
3 phenyl-N-[1-(2-phenylethyl)-4-piperidinyl] propanamide ("fentanyl"),
4 a Schedule II narcotic drug controlled substance, in violation of
5 Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(A)(vi).

6 B. MANNER AND MEANS OF THE CONSPIRACY

7 The object of the conspiracy was to be accomplished, in
8 substance, as follows:

9 1. Defendants ALVA or ARREOLA, or co-conspirators, would
10 procure fentanyl to be distributed to drug customers.

11 2. Defendant ARREOLA would operate and maintain a drug stash
12 house in Perris, California (the "stash house").

13 3. Defendants ALVA and ARREOLA would package fentanyl at the
14 stash house for shipping via U.S. mail so that defendants ALVA and
15 ARANDA could ship the packages through the mail.

16 4. Defendants ARANDA and ALVA would take the packaged fentanyl
17 to U.S. Post Offices in and around Riverside County and mail the
18 parcels to drug customers.

19 C. OVERT ACTS

20 On or about the following dates, in furtherance of the
21 conspiracy and to accomplish its object, defendants ARANDA, ALVA, and
22 ARREOLA, and others known and unknown to the Grand Jury, committed
23 various overt acts within the Central District of California, and
24 elsewhere, including, but not limited to, the following:

25 Overt Act No. 1: On April 26, 2023, at the stash house,
26 defendants ALVA and ARREOLA packaged a brick of fentanyl in a parcel
27 to be sent via U.S. mail to a drug customer.

28

1 Overt Act No. 2: On April 26, 2023, defendant ARANDA picked
2 up a parcel containing approximately 1,006.2 grams of fentanyl from
3 the stash house and mailed it from a U.S. Post Office in Homeland,
4 California.

5 Overt Act No. 3: On July 18, 2023, at the stash house,
6 defendants ALVA and ARREOLA packaged a brick of fentanyl in a parcel
7 to be sent via U.S. mail to a drug customer.

8 Overt Act No. 4: On July 18, 2023, defendant ALVA took the
9 parcel containing approximately 974.8 grams of fentanyl to a U.S.
10 Post Office in Menifee, California, and mailed the parcel.

11 Overt Act No. 5: On July 26, 2023, in a WhatsApp
12 communication, defendant ALVA asked defendant ARANDA if defendant
13 ARANDA could drop off two boxes and if defendant ARANDA could go to
14 the stash house where the two boxes had already been marked.

15 Overt Act No. 6: On July 26, 2023, defendant ARANDA traveled
16 to the stash house and, in a WhatsApp communication, told defendant
17 ALVA that he had arrived.

18 Overt Act No. 7: On July 26, 2023, in a WhatsApp
19 communication, defendant ALVA instructed defendant ARANDA to mail one
20 of the parcels from a U.S. Post Office in Jurupa Valley, California,
21 and the other parcel from a different U.S. Post Office in Jurupa
22 Valley, California.

23 Overt Act No. 8: On July 26, 2023, at the stash house,
24 defendant ARREOLA provided defendant ARANDA with fentanyl for further
25 distribution.

26 Overt Act No. 9: On July 26, 2023, defendant ARANDA mailed a
27 parcel containing approximately 865.3 grams of fentanyl powder from a
28 U.S. Post Office in Jurupa Valley, California.

1 Overt Act No. 10: On July 26, 2023, defendant ARANDA mailed a
2 parcel containing approximately 1,003.5 grams of fentanyl powder from
3 a different U.S. Post Office in Jurupa Valley, California.
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

COUNT TWO

[21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(A)(vi)]

[DEFENDANT ARANDA]

On or about February 23, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendant GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA knowingly and intentionally distributed at least 400 grams, that is, approximately 986.2 grams, of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of N-phenyl-N-[1-(2-phenylethyl)-4-piperidinyl] propenamide ("fentanyl"), a Schedule II narcotic drug controlled substance.

COUNT THREE

[21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(A)(viii)]

[DEFENDANT ARANDA]

On or about February 23, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendant GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA knowingly and intentionally distributed at least 50 grams, that is, approximately 863.68 grams, of methamphetamine, a Schedule II controlled substance.

COUNT FOUR

[21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a) (1), (b) (1) (A) (vi); 18 U.S.C. § 2(a)]

[ALL DEFENDANTS]

On or about April 26, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendants GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA, EDWIN MICHAEL ALVA, and CHRISTOPHER ARREOLA ALVARADO, also known as "Mario Cornejo Martinez," each aiding and abetting the others, knowingly and intentionally distributed at least 400 grams, that is, approximately 1,006.2 grams, of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of N-phenyl-N-[1-(2-phenylethyl)-4-piperidinyl] propanamide ("fentanyl"), a Schedule II narcotic drug controlled substance.

COUNT FIVE

[21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a) (1), (b) (1) (A) (vi); 18 U.S.C. § 2(a)]

[DEFENDANTS ALVA and ARREOLA]

On or about July 18, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendants EDWIN MICHAEL ALVA and CHRISTOPHER ARREOLA ALVARADO, also known as "Mario Cornejo Martinez," each aiding and abetting the other, knowingly and intentionally distributed at least 400 grams, that is, approximately 974.8 grams, of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of N-phenyl-N-[1-(2-phenylethyl)-4-piperidinyl] propanamide ("fentanyl"), a Schedule II narcotic drug controlled substance.

COUNT SIX

[21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a) (1), (b) (1) (A) (vi); 18 U.S.C. § 2(a)]

[ALL DEFENDANTS]

On or about July 26, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendants GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA, EDWIN MICHAEL ALVA, and CHRISTOPHER ARREOLA ALVARADO, also known as "Mario Cornejo Martinez," each aiding and abetting the others, knowingly and intentionally distributed at least 400 grams, that is, approximately 865.3 grams, of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of N-phenyl-N-[1-(2-phenylethyl)-4-piperidinyl] propanamide ("fentanyl"), a Schedule II narcotic drug controlled substance.

COUNT SEVEN

[21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a) (1), (b) (1) (A) (vi); 18 U.S.C. § 2(a)]

[ALL DEFENDANTS]

On or about July 26, 2023, in Riverside County, within the Central District of California, defendants GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA, EDWIN MICHAEL ALVA, and CHRISTOPHER ARREOLA ALVARADO, also known as "Mario Cornejo Martinez," each aiding and abetting the others, knowingly and intentionally distributed at least 400 grams, that is, approximately 1,003.5 grams, of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of N-phenyl-N-[1-(2-phenylethyl)-4-piperidinyl] propanamide ("fentanyl"), a Schedule II narcotic drug controlled substance.

1 SENTENCING ALLEGATION

2 [18 U.S.C. § 851]

3 [DEFENDANT ARANDA]

4 Defendant GEORGE ALEXANDER ARANDA, prior to committing the
5 offenses alleged in Counts One, Two, Three, Four, Six, and Seven of
6 this Indictment, had been finally convicted of a serious drug felony
7 as that term is defined and used in Title 21, United States Code,
8 Sections 802(57), 841, and 851, namely, Importation of Cocaine and
9 Methamphetamine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code,
10 Sections 952, 960 in the United States District Court for the
11 Southern District of California, case number 19-CR-02730-JM, on or
12 about January 24, 2020, for which defendant ARANDA served a term of
13 imprisonment of more than 12 months. Defendant ARANDA was released
14 from a term of imprisonment for that offense within 15 years of the
15 commencement of the offenses alleged in Counts One, Two, Three, Four,
16 Six, and Seven of this Indictment.

17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

1 FORFEITURE ALLEGATION

2 [21 U.S.C. § 853; 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c)]

3 1. Pursuant to Rule 32.2(a) of the Federal Rules of Criminal
4 Procedure, notice is hereby given that the United States of America
5 will seek forfeiture as part of any sentence, pursuant to Title 21,
6 United States Code, Section 853 and Title 28, United States Code,
7 Section 2461(c), in the event of any defendant's conviction of the
8 offenses set forth in any of Counts One through Seven of this
9 Indictment.

10 2. Any defendant so convicted, shall forfeit to the United
11 States of America the following:

12 (a) All right, title and interest in any and all property,
13 real or personal, constituting or derived from, any proceeds which
14 the defendant obtained, directly or indirectly, from any such
15 offense;

16 (b) All right, title and interest in any and all property,
17 real or personal, used, or intended to be used, in any manner or
18 part, to commit, or to facilitate the commission of any such offense;
19 and

20 (c) To the extent such property is not available for
21 forfeiture, a sum of money equal to the total value of the property
22 described in subparagraphs (a) and (b).

23 3. Pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p),
24 any defendant so convicted, shall forfeit substitute property if, by
25 any act or omission of said defendant, the property described in the
26 preceding paragraph, or any portion thereof: (a) cannot be located
27 upon the exercise of due diligence; (b) has been transferred, sold
28 to, or deposited with a third party; (c) has been placed beyond the

1 jurisdiction of the court; (d) has been substantially diminished in
2 value; or (e) has been commingled with other property that cannot be
3 divided without difficulty.

4
5 A TRUE BILL

6
7 /s/
8 Foreperson

9 E. MARTIN ESTRADA
10 United States Attorney

11 MACK E. JENKINS
12 Assistant United States Attorney
13 Chief, Criminal Division

M. Rabe for SMG

14 SCOTT M. GARRINGER
15 Assistant United States Attorney
16 Deputy Chief, Criminal Division

17 BENEDETTO L. BALDING
18 Assistant United States Attorney
19 Deputy Chief, General Crimes
20 Section

21 K. AFIA BONDERO
22 Assistant United States Attorney
23 Major Frauds Section
24
25
26
27
28