



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF 185 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA MOVED FROM TEXAS VIA YELLOW FREIGHT TO KC

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that two Mexican citizens were charged in federal court today with possession of 50 kilograms or more of marijuana.

Manuel Arturo Pinon, 45, and **Mario Arturo Gutierrez-Perez**, 33, both of Mexico, were charged this afternoon in a criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Kansas City.

An affidavit filed in support of the criminal complaint states that law enforcement officers were contacted on Aug. 28, 2003, by a security manager at Yellow Freight Trucking company, located at 3500 Booth, in Kansas City, Mo. The Yellow Freight security officer stated that the company was holding several crates that they found to be suspicious in nature and possibly contained illegal drugs, the affidavit states.

Law enforcement officers responded to the Yellow Freight facility and were notified that the suspicious crates were shipped to Kansas City from El Paso, Texas, via the Yellow Freight Hub in Kansas City. The crates were being shipped to an address of 618 Ewing in Kansas City, which is a non-existent address, the affidavit alleges. The crates were addressed to Arturo Pinon. A K-9 officer alerted law enforcement officers that the crates contained marijuana.

Shortly after law enforcement officers were advised of the suspicious packages, two men arrived at the Yellow Freight facility. One of the men attempted to retrieve the crates, but was unable to show proper identification in order to do so, the affidavit states. The five crates allegedly contained concrete lawn furniture and weighed between 165 and 555 pounds each.

Later in the day, a law enforcement officer, dressed in a Yellow Freight uniform, approached the two men who arrived to retrieve the crates. The men then presented identification with the name "Perez>Gutierrez>Mario>Arturo" printed on it.

The two defendants then responded in a van to the front gate of Yellow Freight. The law enforcement officer dressed in a Yellow Freight uniform advised the defendants that they had been approved to pick up the shipment. Perez then signed the receipt saying that he was picking up the crates. Two of the crates were then loaded into the van.

At that time, law enforcement officers took **Gutierrez-Perez** and **Pinon** into custody and received a search warrant to search the five crates containing decorative concrete pedestals. Law enforcement officers determined that each pedestal contained numerous packages containing a total of 185 pounds of marijuana. **Gutierrez-Perez** and **Pinon** remain in federal custody.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the complaint are simply accusations, and is not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David DeTar Newbert. It was investigated by the Jackson County, Mo., Drug Task Force, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow