

Department of Justice
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Former DEA Agent and His Wife Indicted for Alleged Roles in Scheme to Divert Drug Proceeds from Undercover Money Laundering Investigations

A 19-count indictment in Tampa, Florida, was unsealed today against a former Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) special agent and his wife for their alleged roles to divert drug proceeds from undercover money laundering investigations into bank accounts they, along with family members and criminal associates, controlled.

Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Byung J. Pak of the Northern District of Georgia, Special Agent in Charge James F. Boyersmith of the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General Miami Field Office, Special Agent in Charge Michael F. McPherson of the FBI's Tampa Field Office and Special Agent in Charge Mary E. Hammond of IRS-Criminal Investigation (CI) made the announcement.

The FBI arrested Jose I. Irizarry, 46, and Nathalia Gomez-Irizarry (Gomez), 36, this morning at their residence near San Juan, Puerto Rico. Irizarry and Gomez made their first appearance in U.S. District Court in San Juan today and were released on bond. Their next court appearance is scheduled for Feb. 26.

The indictment alleges that while working as an agent for the DEA in Miami and Cartagena, Colombia, Irizarry engaged in an illegal scheme to divert drug proceeds from undercover money laundering investigations into bank accounts controlled by himself and Gomez, their family members, and their criminal associates. To carry out the plot, Irizarry and his criminal associates are alleged to have opened a bank account with a stolen identity and then utilized the account to secretly send and receive drug proceeds from active DEA investigations.

The indictment further alleges that Irizarry and Gomez used drug proceeds to purchase jewelry, a home and multiple luxury vehicles for themselves and their family. As alleged, Irizarry was in personal bankruptcy proceedings for nearly the duration of this criminal conduct and failed to disclose any of his illicit income to the U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

Irizarry is charged with conspiracy to launder monetary instruments, honest services wire fraud, bank fraud, conspiracy to commit bank fraud, conspiracy to commit identity theft and aggravated identity theft. Gomez is charged with conspiracy to launder monetary instruments.

An indictment is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Trial Attorney Joseph Palazzo of the Criminal Division's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section and First Assistant U.S. Attorney Kurt Erskine of the Northern District of Georgia are prosecuting the case.

The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General, FBI, DEA, IRS-CI, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations investigated the case. The U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs, the Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section's Judicial Attaché's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida and

District of Puerto Rico, the Colombian Attorney General's Office (Fiscalia General de la Nacion) and the South Florida Money Laundering Strike Force at the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office provided valuable assistance.