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Duval County Man Convicted of Marijuana Conspiracy and Money Laundering

MAR 13 -- (Corpus Christi, TX) – Homero Rey Cantu Jr., 36, of Realitos, Texas, was sentenced today to a total of 325 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today. Judge Jack also ordered forfeiture of \$74,632.

A jury found Cantu guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, conspiracy to launder money and providing false statements on a bank loan, Dec. 11, 2007.

During the jury trial, witnesses testified about Cantu's involvement in the transportation and distribution of marijuana and cocaine from the Rio Grande Valley to other destinations within the United States, including Corpus Christi and Houston, Texas, and Louisiana. According to the witnesses, Cantu was the leader within this organization but also acted as a "Gate-Keeper" for other drug trafficking organizations for the transportation of marijuana and cocaine through the ranches of South Texas in order to circumvent federal checkpoints.

Through the course of the overall investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Texas Department of Public Safety (TX DPS) have identified and arrested more than 15 conspirators involved with Cantu, all of whom have pleaded guilty. As a result of their efforts, agents have seized \$100,000, 120 kilograms of cocaine and more than 4,000 kilograms of marijuana Cantu conspired to distribute throughout the United States.

The investigation leading to the criminal charges was conducted through the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force in Corpus Christi by special agents of the DEA, ICE, TX DPS and the IRS. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jon Muschenheim.

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