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# Leader of drug ring must serve 27 years

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Originally published 02:31 a.m., March 14, 2008
Updated 02:31 a.m., March 14, 2008

A 36-year-old Duval County man has been sentenced to 27 years in prison and ordered to forfeit more than $74,000 for his role as the leader of a drug trafficking group.

Last December, a jury found Homero Rey Cantu Jr. of Realitos 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, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

U.S. District Judge Janis Graham Jack sentenced Cantu on Thursday in Corpus Christi.

During his trial, witnesses testified Cantu led an organization that transported marijuana and cocaine from the Rio Grande Valley to locations across the United States, including to Corpus Christi, Houston and Louisiana. Cantu also helped coordinate the distribution for other drug trafficking organizations, which traveled through South Texas ranches to avoid federal checkpoints.

During the investigation, the local and federal authorities arrested more than 15 of Cantu's conspirators, who all pleaded guilty to charges related to the case, and seized $100,000, 120 kilograms of cocaine and about 4,000 kilograms of marijuana, according to the release.

-- Mary Ann Cavazos

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