



## 1994-1998

Two of the most significant features of the drug trade in the mid-1990s were its scope and sophistication. The drug trade had expanded into a global problem, and the unprecedented power and wealth of the traffickers allowed them to manage their worldwide business with the most sophisticated technology and com-



munications equipment that money could buy. The drug trade had evolved into a well-organized, highly structured enterprise that spanned the world. Drug trafficking activities were conducted in a seamless continuum, with individual organizations controlling all aspects of the drug trade, from cultivating or manufacturing drugs in source countries to transporting them through international zones and eventually selling them on the streets of American communities.

DEA adjusted its strategy to address the unprecedented influence and power of the international drug mafias while working to reduce violent drug-related crime in American communities. Initially hampered by budget cutbacks in the late 1980s, by the mid-to-late 1990s, the agency had increased its budget, its staffing, and its cooperation with law enforcement counterparts in the U.S. and abroad.

During this time period, violent drug gangs proliferated around the country. Violence and drug trafficking went hand-in-hand. More than 1.5 million Americans were arrested for drug law violations in 1996. Many crimes (e.g., assault, prostitution, and robbery) were committed under the influence of drugs or motivated by a need to get money for drugs. Competition and disputes contributed to violence as did the location of drug markets in areas where legal and social controls on violence tended to be ineffective.

The availability of automatic weapons also made drug violence more deadly. In addition to the rampant violence and denigration of neighborhoods, child abuse, crack babies, AIDS, homelessness, and a host of other drug-related afflictions also degraded the quality of life in many communities. Some influential intellectuals in America, in their frustration, began to advocate the wholesale legalization of drugs as a solution to the drug problem.

Another challenge facing drug law enforcement was the fact that heroin, which previously had been smuggled mostly from Asia, was being smuggled into the U.S. from a new source—South America.

### ***Conviction of Dandeny Munoz-Mosquera (1994)***

Dandeny Munoz-Mosquera, the Medellin cartel's chief assassin, was arrested in Queens, NY, on Sept. 25, 1991, for making false statements to a DEA special agent. Following Munoz's trial, conviction, and subsequent six-year sentence under the false statement charge, Munoz was then tried for his involvement in the 1989 midair bombing of Avianca flight-203, in which 107 people died when the cartel wanted to kill one informant on the plane. Because two American citizens were on board, the U.S. was able to charge Munoz with homicide in that case. Munoz was also linked to hundreds of other murders that he committed while serving as the cartel's most prolific assassin. In December 1994, Munoz was convicted in New York and sentenced to 10 life terms for the Avianca homicide charges, as well as two 20-year terms and one 5-year term on a variety of drug trafficking and RICO charges, all to be served consecutively.

### ***Operation Snowcap is Concluded (1994)***

Operation Snowcap was one of the major issues of concern that the SACs brought to the attention of incoming Administrator Constantine. The program was originally instituted to eliminate the flow of cocaine by building up internal law enforcement resources in the source countries and by teaching enforcement

techniques to foreign counterparts. However, it had evolved to the point that DEA agents were also participating in drug law enforcement activities.

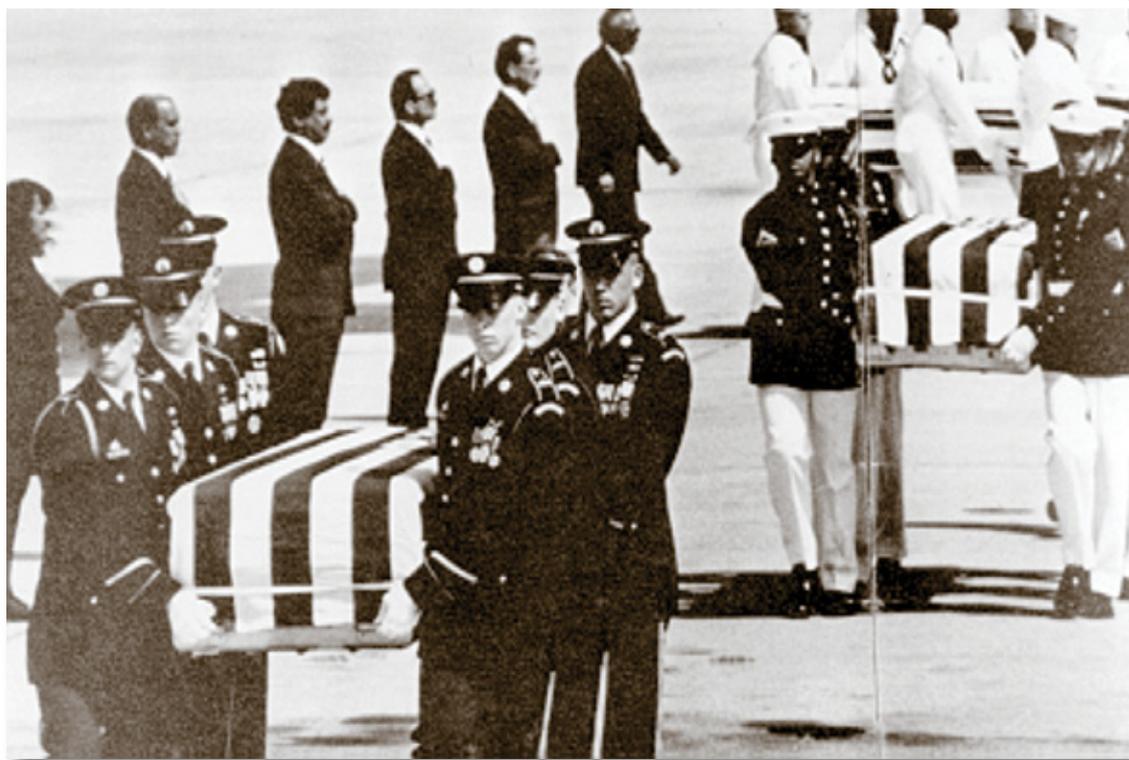
Snowcap was envisioned as a temporary program, but after seven years of operation it became a serious drain on DEA domestic field division resources. The constant rotation of individuals from domestic field investigations made it difficult for the agents to initiate and follow through on casework and follow-up court testimony. In addition, because of the dangerous terrain the agents worked in, many agents who volunteered for Snowcap tours underwent intensive jungle training to prepare for the adversity that their tours of duty to the Latin American jungles created. This training, although a necessity to the agents, further depleted the domestic field divisions of badly needed special agents.

These personnel limitations made it increasingly difficult for the domestic field divisions to combat the rising tide of drug-related violent crime in their regions. In order to address the SACs concerns, and because Operation Snowcap had achieved its goal of helping other countries' drug law enforcement agencies become more self-sufficient, a decision was made to phase out Snowcap and refocus DEA's role in overseas operations. As a result, Snowcap's temporary positions were gradually eliminated. Nevertheless, DEA continued to support permanent positions in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. The agents in these positions provided support and training assistance and served as liaison officers and advisors. The phase-out of Operation Snowcap marked a significant change in the role of DEA agents in certain overseas posts.

### ***Peru Airplane Crash (1994)***

On Aug. 27, 1994, during a routine reconnaissance mission near Santa Lucia, Peru, a DEA airplane carrying five special agents crashed, killing all aboard. The DEA special agents were assigned to Operation Snowcap, which had provided support and training for Peruvian and Bolivian law enforcement personnel between 1987 and 1994. The crash site was 15 miles west of Santa Lucia, an airstrip in the foothills of the Andes Mountains of western Peru in the Upper Huallaga River Valley, where much of the world's coca leaves for cocaine were grown. They were searching for clandestine drug operations in an area that is known for its multitude of laboratories and airstrips. The DEA transport plane had been traveling from Santa Lucia when it lost contact with air traffic control.

The DEA, the Peruvian Air Force, the Peruvian Police, and U.S. Special Forces teams assigned to Peru joined in the search for the lost aircraft. On August 28 they were scouring the area



*The bodies of DEA agents killed in the Peru Airplane Crash are brought home, September 3, 1994.*

around Puerto Piána, about 285 miles northeast of Lima, when they spotted the wreckage of the twin-engine cargo aircraft. A six-man search team began hacking through the jungle but was slowed by heavy rains and nightfall. The search team, which included two DEA agents, reached the site on Monday, August 29, and discovered the bodies of the two pilots and the three agents amid the wreckage of the Casa aircraft.

The special agents were: Frank Fernandez Jr., stationed at DEA headquarters; Jay W. Seale, stationed in Los Angeles; Meredith Thompson, stationed at the Miami office; Juan C. Vars, stationed at the San Antonio office; and Frank S. Wallace Jr., stationed at the Houston office. Their bodies arrived back in the U.S. on Sept. 3, 1994, on a C-141 transport jet that landed in front of hundreds of family members, friends, and DEA agents, each of whom wore black ribbons over their badges.

"This is just so tragic. They were fine special agents and fine young people," DEA Administrator Thomas Constantine said. "For those people who say there is no price to pay for casual drug use, tell that to the families and friends going through this tragic time." In May 1995, the families of the five special agents received the Administrator's Award of Honor. This posthumous award recognized the bravery of Special Agents Wallace, Vars, Thompson, Seale, and Fernandez.

### ***Operation Dinero (1994)***

Operation Dinero, a joint DEA/IRS (Internal Revenue Service) operation, was launched by the DEA's Atlanta Division in 1992. In this investigation, the U.S. Government successfully operated a financial institution in Anguilla for the purpose of targeting the financial networks of international drug organizations. In addition, a number of undercover corporations were established in different jurisdictions as multi-service "front" businesses designed to supply "money laundering" services such as loans, cashier's checks, wire transfers, and peso exchanges, or to establish holding companies or shell corporations for the trafficking groups. Believing



*Operation Dinero (1994)*



*DEA agents make an arrest in Charlestown, Massachusetts.*

these services were legitimate, the Cali mafia engaged the bank to sell three paintings, a Picasso, a Rubens, and a Reynolds. These paintings, estimated to have a combined value of \$15 million, were seized by DEA and IRS in 1994. The operation resulted in 116 arrests in the U.S., Spain, Italy, and Canada and the seizure of nine tons of cocaine, and the seizure of more than \$90 million in cash and other property. The two-year joint enforcement operation was coordinated by the DEA, IRS, INS, FBI, and international law enforcement counterparts in the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, and Spain.

### ***Charlestown, MA***

Between 1975 and 1992, Charlestown, a small community in North Boston, MA, experienced 49 murders, 33 of which were unsolved. The difficulty in finding information about the murders was caused by the unspoken “Code of Silence” that the Charlestown citizens had adopted. The community was unwilling to share information that would facilitate homicide investigations, possibly because of fear of retaliation by criminals, anti-police sentiment, or reliance on vigilante justice. Charlestown was a major PCP and cocaine distribution center that was run by the “Irish Mob,” a group of career criminals. Because drugs were a large part of Charlestown’s crime problem, DEA got involved and joined forces with the Massachusetts State Police, Boston Police Department, and Boston Housing Police Department. DEA agents and local officers worked together to establish a comprehensive case against the criminals in the neighborhood and found informants and other intelligence critical to solving both drug and murder cases. Agents arranged to protect any witnesses who agreed to testify against the Charlestown criminals. As a result of three years of extensive investigations in Charlestown, by July 1994, 40 defendants were indicted on charges that included racketeering, murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to distribute cocaine, and armed robbery. Once the violent criminals were taken from the Charlestown community, the threat of retaliation was removed and the code of silence was broken. A hotline set up by DEA

yielded hundreds of calls from community residents that resulted in valuable leads and more significant arrests. The cooperative efforts by DEA and local law enforcement agencies greatly diminished Charlestown’s violence problem.

### ***Creation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Field Division: Special Operations (1994)***

In a decision to elevate the attention given to targeting the highest levels of the international drug traffic, Administrator Constantine approved the creation of a new division called Special Operations (SOD) which became fully functional in 1994. Its mission was to target the command and control capabilities of major drug trafficking organizations from Mexico, Colombia, and elsewhere. Originally, the division was exclusively operated by DEA. In 1995, the FBI became full partners in the division, followed by the U.S. Customs Service in 1996. SOD was given the ability to collect, collate, analyze, evaluate, and disseminate intelligence derived from worldwide multi-agency elements. This information was then passed to domestic field divisions and foreign country offices for real-time or near real-time support to programmed investigative and enforcement activity directed against major trafficking organizations that operated on a regional, national, or international basis. With regard to domestic enforcement, the division’s foremost function was to help field divisions build national conspiracy cases derived from multi-jurisdictional wiretap investigations.

### ***Operation Tiger Trap (1994)***

Operation Tiger Trap was conceived at DEA’s Bangkok Office during June of 1994 with the goal of identifying and targeting the major heroin traffickers in the region. Operation Tiger Trap was the first of its kind, a multi-agency international operation designed to dismantle or disrupt the trafficking activities of the world’s largest heroin trafficking organization, the Shan United Army (SUA). Also known as the Mong Tai Army, it was located primarily in the areas of Burma adjacent to the northern border provinces of Thailand.

The SUA Warlord Khun Sa claimed that his army, which was financed primarily through heroin trafficking, was fighting the Burmese for the independence for the Shan people.

The SUA controlled the cultivation, production, and transportation of heroin from the Shan State. Although other insurgent groups in Burma also trafficked heroin, the SUA had been the dominant force in worldwide distribution. Prior to Operation Tiger Trap, the percentage of Southeast Asian heroin from DEA's Heroin Signature Program rose from 9 percent in 1977 to 58 percent in 1991.

Tiger Trap was divided into phases that would all target key Shan United Army (SUA) functionaries. On Nov. 27, 1994, the operation culminated when teams of Royal Thai Police, Office of Narcotics Control Board Officers, and Royal Thai Army Special Forces Soldiers working with DEA agents lured targets in Burma into Thailand where they were then arrested. This action significantly damaged the ability of the SUA to distribute heroin. The Royal Thai Army then worked with the Thai Border Patrol Police to close the Burma border to "commercial quantities" of goods entering the Shan State.

When law enforcement authorities had completed their operations, 13 senior SUA traffickers were arrested, and all were pursued for extradition/expulsion to the U.S. These 13 principal defendants in Operation Tiger Trap included some of the most persistent and high-level heroin traffickers operating out of Thailand. They were all subjects of U.S. indictments in the Eastern District of New York. The defendants were a mixture of three distinct categories: those who were eligible for expulsion (illegal aliens in Thailand); those who possessed fraudulent identification; and authentic Thai citizens.

### ***New Wall of Honor (1995)***

In order to pay a fitting tribute to the men and women of DEA and state and local task forces who have given their lives in the line of duty, Administrator Constantine directed that a new, more visible Memorial Wall of Honor be erected in the lobby of DEA headquarters. The 20-foot memorial displayed a picture of each DEA agent and state and local task force member who died in the line of duty.

### ***Mobile Enforcement Teams (1995)***

Many communities across America were suffering the devastating effects of drug-related crime and violence. Numerous drug-related homicides were unsolved, and, in too many cases, witnesses were afraid to come forward with information. Administrator Constantine believed that DEA had a great deal of expertise and the resources necessary to assist state and local law enforcement agencies address drug-related problems in their communities. He established the Mobile Enforcement Team (MET) program in April 1995 to overcome two major challenges that faced state and local agencies in drug enforcement: limited resources—equipment, funding, and diversifica-



*Operation Tiger Trap toppled SUA Warlord and heroin trafficker Khun Sa.*



*On December 3, 1993, law enforcement authorities seize 315 kilos of heroin in Pae, Thailand.*



*SA Jake Carter (far right) helped with an enforcement operation against the Northwest Raiders in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, 1995.*



tion of personnel—that were needed to effectively perform drug enforcement; and the fact that local law enforcement personnel were often recognizable to local drug users and sellers, making undercover buys and penetration of local distribution rings difficult and dangerous.

The MET teams, composed of specially trained and equipped DEA special agents, were strategically located across the country to facilitate rapid deployment to communities where police chiefs or sheriffs requested their assistance. MET investigations were immediately successful in reducing the impact of drug-related violence.

One of the DEA's first MET deployments was in Galveston County, TX, in May 1995. In a single week, Galveston County had experienced five drive-by shootings, and the Sheriff of Galveston County requested assistance from the DEA's Houston Division to combat the increasing violence. The Galveston Narcotics Task Force, working with the Houston MET, launched an investigation of the drug gang believed to be connected to the shootings. Only days later, five adults were arrested on charges of attempted homicide and deadly conduct. Two juveniles were also arrested and charged with the theft of the firearms used in the shootings. On June 12, 1995, three additional suspects were arrested; one was believed to be responsible for multiple homicides in the area.

In another example of a DEA MET success, a MET team dispatched to Opa-Locka, FL, worked to dismantle a dangerous crack cocaine organization. This group was headed by Rickey Brownlee, a violent trafficker who had intimidated the citizens of Opa-Locka for years and was alleged to have been involved in 13 murders since 1993. In a letter to the Attorney General, Mayor of Opa-Locka Robert B. Ingram, thanked DEA for its expertise in the January 1998 dismantling of one of South Florida's most notorious criminal enterprises. To further show his appreciation, Mayor Ingram issued an official proclamation declaring March 19, 1998, "Drug Enforcement Administration/Mobile Enforcement Team Day."

Similar MET success stories were recorded all across the country as state and local law enforcement requested assistance from DEA. From their 1995 inception through September 1998, the Mobile Enforcement Teams arrested over 6,800 violent drug traffickers across the country, seized vast quantities of drugs, and helped many state and local police departments restore peace to their communities.

### ***Oklahoma City Bombing (1995)***

DEA was again touched by tragedy on April 19, 1995, when a bomb exploded at the Alfred E. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK, and killed 168 people, including 19 children. Five DEA employees were killed and three additional DEA personnel sustained injuries in the explosion. DEA offices on the seventh and ninth floors were completely destroyed. Twenty-

seven employees had been assigned to the DEA's Oklahoma City Resident Office, including 10 DEA special agents, four DEA diversion investigators, three secretaries, and several task force personnel.

Within minutes of the blast, DEA agents were assisting the fire and rescue workers in evacuating the federal building. DEA sent personnel from the Tulsa, McAlester, Dallas, Tyler, Lubbock, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Ft. Lauderdale, and San Antonio Offices to assist in rescue and investigative efforts. By the first afternoon, DEA had a command post set up at the scene and a DEA trauma team was providing counseling for the survivors. The rescue efforts were extremely difficult and time consuming, and DEA employees joined in the search for lost personnel. The first priority was to locate the bodies of the employees that were unaccounted for and to take care of their families.

On April 21, 1995, DEA confirmed the deaths of two employees assigned to the Oklahoma City Resident Office, Kenneth G. McCullough and Carrie Ann Lenz and her unborn son, Michael James Lenz III. Mrs. Lenz was six months pregnant with her first child. Rescue workers next recovered the bodies of DEA employee Rona L. Chafey and DynCorp Legal Technician Shelly Bland. During the early morning hours of April 24, 1995, workers recovered the body of office assistant Carrol Fields from the ruins.



*The Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995.*

Upon learning of the deaths, DEA Administrator Constantine flew to Oklahoma City to offer support to the grieving families. He stated that, “Our condolences go out to the families of these...good people, and to all the families who have lost loved ones in this cowardly and inhumane attack. The entire DEA family mourns their loss.” Administrator Constantine then pledged to commit DEA’s “resources and professional expertise, in collaboration with other agencies, to bring all of the perpetrators of this crime to justice.”

On June 2, 1997, Timothy McVeigh was convicted of 11 counts of conspiracy and first-degree murder after a jury trial. The same panel later recommended the death penalty for the murders of 168 people, including eight federal law enforcement agents, in the April 19, 1995, bombing.

For their heroic actions in response to the Oklahoma City Bombing, Midwest City Police Corporal Regina Bonny and DEA Special Agent David Schickedanz were recipients of the 1996 Police Officer of the year Award given by *Parade* and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Regina Bonny was an undercover narcotics officer on assignment with DEA at the time of the explosion. After initially being knocked unconscious by the blast, she assisted an ATF officer before exiting the collapsed building. Although she was injured (and was later diagnosed with irreparable nerve damage, brain injury, and hand and shoulder wounds), she returned to the building, sprinted up the stairs to the ninth floor, and searched for other DEA employees. David Schickedanz was in an elevator with ATF supervisor Alex McCauley when the explosion dropped the elevator six floors. After he escaped from the elevator through a trap door, he returned to the destroyed DEA office to look for survivors. He suffered from smoke inhalation and a partial loss of hearing.

After the bombing, the DEA Oklahoma City Resident Office made efforts to recover some of the law enforcement resources lost in the explosion. The office rebuilt its record file by obtaining copies of any records available at headquarters. As all evidence at the office was destroyed, the evidence collection had to be completely rebuilt. DEA relocated the office to 990 Broadway Extension, Oklahoma City, approximately 10 miles from the former Murrah Building.

### **Operation Green Ice II (1995)**

Green Ice II, a spin-off of the successful 1992 Green Ice investigation, culminated in April 1995 with the arrest of 109 individuals and the seizure of 13,882 pounds of cocaine, 16 pounds of heroin, and \$15.6 million in cash. This second phase operation concentrated on the Cali mafia’s money brokers and cocaine distribution networks from Mexico to the U.S. Once again, DEA established storefront operations and bank accounts throughout the world, then convinced drug traffickers that undercover DEA agents had connections to launder their drug proceeds. Most of the individuals arrested were high-ranking Cali cell leaders or money brokers in the U.S. Green



*Agents counting money seized during Operation Green Ice II.*

Ice II had three distinct phases. The first targeted certain *Casas de Cambio* and check cashing institutions along the Southwest border. *Casas de Cambio* are legal, unregulated money exchange houses that operated much like banks. These organizations wire-transferred large sums of money and did not keep records of the source or owner of the funds. Second, the DEA agents working on this case created their own money exchange houses and also infiltrated existing *Casas de Cambio* to identify major narcotic traffickers, money launderers, and the financial institutions used by the traffickers. The third portion of the investigation followed the money into Colombia and linked specific cartel members with the narcotics proceeds. Ultimately, more than 200 federal agents from 27 federal, state, and foreign law enforcement agencies contributed to the indictment of over 80 individuals. In addition, Operation Green Ice II enabled DEA to gain a wealth of knowledge on wire transfer information, bank accounts, and identification of money couriers/brokers. It also proved that corrupt businessmen, bankers, and attorneys had created an alliance with drug dealers to funnel their drug profits back to them.

### **Operation Global Sea (1995)**

In 1994, Southeast Asian heroin, which was smuggled by ethnic China and Nigeria-based traffickers, was one of the greatest drug threats to the U.S. Almost 60 percent of the heroin that came to the U.S. at that time originated in Southeast Asia’s “Golden Triangle”—Burma, Laos, and Thailand. Those mainly responsible were ethnic Chinese traffickers who controlled sophisticated international networks that smuggled hundreds of kilograms of heroin in commercial cargo on a regular basis. The China, Nigeria and West Africa-based trafficking organizations helped smuggle the heroin, typically using the “shotgun” approach to smuggling by recruiting third party couriers to travel aboard commercial airlines and smuggle from one to 10 kilograms of heroin per trip. In response to this facet of the drug trade, Operation Global Sea targeted a Nigerian, female-led, drug trafficking organization that was responsible for smuggling into the U.S. \$26 million worth of high-purity Southeast Asian heroin. Global Sea, an Organized Crime Drug Enforce-



*The heroin distribution operation targeted in Operation Global Sea was directed by Ms. Kafayat Majekodunmi, shown after her arrest by DEA special agents.*

ment Task Force operation, was comprised of the DEA, the U.S. Customs Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and law enforcement authorities in Thailand, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Mexico, and the Netherlands. By the end of this 18-month investigation, Operation Global Sea had immobilized the Chicago-based drug organization by seizing 55.5 kilograms of heroin with an average purity of 80 percent and arresting 44 defendants in Bangkok, Chicago, New York City, Detroit, and Pakistan.

### ***Arrest of Cali Leaders (1995)***

During the summer of 1995, six top leaders of the Cali mafia surrendered or were arrested by Colombian authorities under the leadership of CNP Director General Rosso Serrano, and the Cali mafia began to collapse. The arrest of the entire hierarchy of the wealthiest and most powerful international criminal organization was the most significant enforcement action taken against organized crime leaders since the Appalachian Gangster Raid in 1957 that exposed the existence and power of organized crime syndicates in the U.S.

On June 9, 1995, Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela was arrested by the Colombian National Police (CNP) during a house raid in Cali. When the police searched the home several days earlier, Rodriguez-Orejuela hid in a hollowed-out bathroom cabinet with an oxygen tank. The CNP's excellent police work led to his arrest. After he was taken into custody, police discovered that he had a copy of an unclassified DEA report titled "The Kings of Cocaine" that had been translated into Spanish. He was sentenced to a prison term of 13 years.

On June 19, 1995, Henry Loiza-Ceballos, who had overseen the mafia's military infrastructure, surrendered to police. He was considered one of the most violent members of the Cali drug mafia and was linked to at least three massacres in Colombia.

On June 24, 1995, Victor Julio Patino-Fomeque, who was responsible for ensuring the security and effectiveness of the mafia's maritime operations, also surrendered and was sentenced to 12 years behind bars.

On July 4, 1995, Jose Santacruz-Londono, the number three leader in the Cali mafia, was arrested by the CNP as he dined

with associates at a Bogota steak house. He was never sentenced because he escaped from prison and was killed in March 1996 during a confrontation with the CNP.

Finally, on Aug. 6, 1995, Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela, the brother of Gilberto, was arrested when the CNP broke down the door of his apartment and found him hiding in a secret closet during another house raid. He was sentenced to 21 years.

Less than one year later, there were two more arrests of major Cali mafia leaders. In March 1996, Juan Carlos "Chupeta" Ramirez-Abadia, surrendered to Colombian authorities and was later sentenced to 24 years in prison.

On Sept. 1, 1996, Helmer "Pacho" Herrera-Buitrago surrendered to Colombian authorities. He was one of the charter members of the Cali mafia and was the remaining "Kingpin" being sought by Colombian authorities. He was sentenced to six years in prison.

These arrests marked the beginning of the decline of the Cali mafia and were the results of extensive investigation by DEA. However, the investigations of the Cali mafia would not have been as successful if not for the outstanding efforts of the CNP. Remarking on the CNP's contributions to combatting the drug problem in Colombia, Administrator Constantine remarked in 1998, "No one has sacrificed more than the Colombian National Police. At great sacrifice to themselves, and in the face of extraordinary temptations for corruption, General Rosso Serrano and his brave law enforcement officers have fought the powerful drug traffickers in Colombia."



*CNP Gen. Rosso Serrano (right) is pictured with Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela (center) shortly after his 1995 arrest.*

### ***Rise of Traffickers in Mexico***

When enforcement efforts intensified in South Florida and the Caribbean, the Colombian organizations formed partnerships with the Mexico-based traffickers to transport cocaine through Mexico into the U.S. This was easily accomplished because Mexico had long been a major source of heroin and marijuana, and drug traffickers from Mexico had already established an infrastructure that stood ready to serve the Colombia-based traffickers.

Mexican cocaine trafficking had been pioneered by Juan Ramon Matta-Ballesteros, a Honduran who, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, was actively involved with the Mexican Guadalajara cartel. This was the group largely responsible for the kidnapping, torture, and murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena in 1985. By the mid-1980s, the organizations from Mexico were well-established and reliable transporters of Colombian cocaine.

Throughout the 1990s, the U.S. was faced with trafficking organizations from Mexico that worked with the Cali drug organizations to smuggle more and more cocaine into the U.S. By the 1990s, traffickers from Colombia were buying large cargo and passenger jets similar to 727s, gutting them, and using them to transport multi-ton loads of cocaine to Mexico. The planes were then refueled and returned to Colombia loaded with millions of dollars in cash. At first, the Mexican gangs were paid in cash for their transportation services. But in the late 1980s, the Mexican transport organizations and the Colombian drug traffickers settled on a payment-in-product arrangement. Transporters from Mexico usually were given 35 to 50 percent of each cocaine shipment. This arrangement meant that organizations from Mexico became involved in the distribution, as well as the transportation, of cocaine, and became formidable traffickers in their own right.

The criminal organizations based in Mexico demonstrated an ability to corrupt officials serving in high-level positions. Drug-related corruption was probably the single greatest obstacle that law enforcement faced in its battle against drug traffickers from Mexico. Ernesto Zedillo, the President of Mexico, recognized drug-related corruption as a threat to Mexican national security and, in 1998, announced a national initiative to fight, crime, violence, and corruption. In another attempt to overcome the problem of widespread corruption in law enforcement, the Mexican Government replaced civilian authorities with military officers. The following describes the most powerful drug traffickers and their status in the late 1990s.

#### ***The Amado Carrillo-Fuentes Organization***

When Amado Carrillo-Fuentes died in Mexico City on July 4, 1997, after undergoing plastic surgery, he was considered the most powerful trafficker in Mexico. By 1999, the Carrillo-Fuentes organization, based in Juarez, is still involved in the trafficking of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. Its regional bases were in Juarez, Hermosillo, and Reynosa, where the organization stored drugs for eventual shipment into the U.S. Amado Carrillo-Fuentes' organization was associated with the Cali-based Rodriguez-Orejuela organization and the Ochoa brothers of Medellin.

#### ***The Arellano-Felix Brothers Organization***

This Tijuana-based organization was one of the most powerful, violent, and aggressive trafficking groups in the world. The Arellano-Felix Organization had high-level contacts within the Mexican law enforcement and judicial systems and was directly

involved in street-level trafficking within the U.S. This criminal organization was responsible for the transportation, importation, and distribution of multi-ton quantities of cocaine and marijuana, as well as large quantities of heroin and methamphetamine. The Arellano family, composed of seven brothers and four sisters, inherited the organization from Miguel Angel Felix-Gallardo upon his incarceration in Mexico in 1989 for his complicity in the murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena. Alberto Benjamin Arellano-Felix assumed leadership of the family enterprise and provided a businessman's approach to the management of their drug empire, which operated in Tijuana, Baja California, and parts of the States of Sinaloa, Sonora, Jalisco, and Tamaulipas. Benjamin coordinated the activities of the organization through his brothers Ramon, Eduardo, and Francisco.

#### ***The Juan Garcia-Abrego Organization***

The Juan Garcia-Abrego organization was involved in smuggling drugs from the Yucatan area in Mexico to South Texas and north to New York. This organization transported large quantities of cocaine for the Cali mafia, as well as marijuana and heroin for other traffickers. Garcia-Abrego pioneered deals in which Mexican traffickers were compensated in cocaine. This substantially raised their profits and allowed them to distribute, as well as smuggle, cocaine. He and his organization were notorious for their violence. In 1996, Juan Garcia-Abrego was added to the FBI's top ten most wanted fugitives, with a \$2 million reward for his capture. This was the first time an international drug trafficker had been included on the FBI list. In January 1996, he was arrested in Mexico and brought to the U.S. for trial. He was sentenced to 11 life terms and fined \$128 million.

#### ***The Miguel Caro-Quintero Organization***

The Miguel Caro-Quintero organization was based in Sonora, Mexico. It was involved in cultivating, processing, smuggling, and distributing heroin and marijuana, and in transporting methamphetamine and Colombian cocaine into the U.S. It was led by Rafael Caro-Quintero, known as the "Mexican Rhinestone Cowboy," until he was arrested and placed in a Mexican maximum security prison for his involvement in the kidnapping, torture, and murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena. Rafael Caro-Quintero was also convicted on marijuana and cocaine trafficking charges. His brothers, Miguel, Jorge, and Genaro, assumed control of the organization. Miguel was arrested in 1992, but was able to use a combination of threats and bribes to have the charges dismissed by a federal judge in Hermosillo, Mexico, under questionable circumstances.

#### ***Creation of 21<sup>st</sup> Field Division: The Caribbean (1995)***

While it is true that the majority of cocaine that entered the U.S. came across the U.S.-Mexican border, traffickers were beginning to reactivate their trafficking routes in the Caribbean. Many trafficking groups from Colombia, particularly those who had risen to power since the Cali syndicate's fall, returned to traditional Caribbean routes to transport their product to market. As these groups from Colombia reestablished their ties with their Caribbean confederates, increasingly larger shipments of cocaine and heroin were shipped through the Caribbean. The resulting drug activity in Puerto Rico led to a tremendous increase in violence



on the island, and Puerto Rico became the nation's 7<sup>th</sup> major High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

In response to this escalating problem, in 1995, DEA established the Caribbean Division based in San Juan, Puerto Rico, as its 21<sup>st</sup> Field Division. The division was responsible for five country offices that had previously reported to the Miami regional office: Netherlands Antilles, Barbados, Haiti, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic, in addition to the St. Thomas Resident Office and the St. Croix Post of Duty in the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Ponce Resident Office in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

### Atlanta Olympics (1996)

The White House requested that DEA and other federal law enforcement agencies assist with security during the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, GA. As a result, over 200 men and women from DEA were detailed to Atlanta. Security was an important issue because national leaders from some 197 participating nations, athletes, coaches, and visitors from all over the world attended the event. DEA had previously provided assistance at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 and at the 1987 Pan American Games in Indianapolis, IN. When a bomb exploded in Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta on the ninth day of the Olympic games, DEA agents were instrumental in preserving the safety of hundreds of spectators. They had been on hand when FBI and Defense Department experts identified a suspicious-looking knapsack as a bomb just minutes before it exploded. DEA agents, along with Georgia State patrol and other law enforcement officers, hurriedly began evacuating the few hundred people in the park. The agents risked their own safety by attempting to evacuate nearby civilians and, after the explosion, administering first aid. The agents' ability to remain calm and focused during this chaotic situation undoubtedly saved many lives. One DEA agent, Craig Wiles, was injured in the blast. He was stationed just 25 to 30 feet from the explosion and was struck in the back of the head by a piece of wood. Despite his injuries, Special Agent Wiles continued to help fellow agents and wounded civilians. He was later taken to nearby Georgia Baptist Medical Center where doctors removed wood splinters from his head. Wiles fully recovered within a few days and was the first agent to receive the DEA's Purple Heart Award. All of the DEA agents who helped evacuate Centennial Olympic Park were honored for their courage when that group, Atlanta Olympic Division Squad 23, was given the Administrator's Award for Outstanding Group Achievement in 1997.

### The Methamphetamine Problem

In the mid-nineties, trafficking groups from Mexico became deeply involved in the methamphetamine trade, replacing domestic outlaw motorcycle gangs as the predominant methamphet-



*A member of the 21<sup>st</sup> Field Division walks through a field of cannabis plants.*



*Atlanta Olympic Division Squad 23.*

amine producers, traffickers, and distributors. Their involvement was made tragically clear when, during an undercover operation, DEA Special Agent Richard Fass was shot and killed in Tucson, AZ, on June 30, 1994, by a methamphetamine trafficker from Mexico.

By the late 1990s, these trafficking organizations had virtually saturated the western U.S. market with high-purity methamphetamine, known also as "speed" or "crank." In some areas of California, methamphetamine replaced cocaine as the drug of choice. With a saturated West Coast market, the traffickers then began to expand their markets to the East Coast, South, and the Mid-West.

As supplies increased, prices fell, making it a cheap alternative to cocaine. Some called it the "poor man's cocaine." In 1991, for example, the lowest price nationwide for a pound of methamphetamine was \$6,000. By 1995, in California, methamphetamine sold for between \$2,500 and \$3,600 per pound.

With increased availability, methamphetamine use increased. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network, the number of emergency room episodes involving methamphetamine increased steadily after 1991, particularly in the West. From 1991 to 1993, episodes more than doubled in both Los Angeles and Phoenix.

The sophistication of the organizations from Mexico was also

clear. Their long-standing expertise in polydrug smuggling and the smuggling skills developed while transporting cocaine for the Cali mafia had enabled these organizations to branch out into other contraband, such as the precursor chemicals ephedrine and pseudoephedrine that are used in the manufacture of methamphetamine.

They also established international connections in Europe, Asia, and the Far East to have tons of precursor chemicals, particularly ephedrine, shipped to addresses in both the U.S. and Mexico. During 1993 and 1994, the majority of ephedrine shipments destined for Mexico were supplied by such diverse countries as China, India, the Czech Republic, and Switzerland. From mid-1993 to early 1995, DEA documented the diversion of almost 170 tons of ephedrine used in illicit methamphetamine production.

Unlike other drugs, methamphetamine is one that these criminal organizations from Mexico controlled entirely from beginning to end. They had the international contacts to obtain the necessary precursor chemicals to make the drug.

They also had the clandestine labs to process the chemicals into methamphetamine on both sides of the border. They expanded

their distribution networks across the nation by the use and intimidation of illegal aliens. Also, unlike when they served as middlemen moving cocaine and heroin, they kept 100 percent of the profits from their methamphetamine sales.

In late 1994, state and local authorities in California requested a meeting with Administrator Constantine to express their growing concerns about escalating methamphetamine abuse and the increasing number of clandestine meth labs being encountered in that state. Their concerns and the information they provided mirrored intelligence DEA was receiving about a scourge of meth abuse cases in many areas of the country. Working closely with California law enforcement, DEA hosted a National Methamphetamine Conference in February 1996.

The conference brought together experts from around the U.S. to examine enforcement and policy options. It was structured to incorporate not only the input of knowledgeable DEA personnel, but also the experience of the state and local law enforcement agencies that had been encountering the problem. Conferees heard reports from state, local, and other federal agencies about the methamphetamine situation and exchanged ideas on a number of strategies to address the problem in the U.S.

In his opening remarks, Administrator Constantine stated that the benefit of holding the conference was that it allowed those with extensive experience in drug law enforcement “to help identify the scope of the methamphetamine problem and to ensure that [there would be] a coordinated response.” Participants offered their input by filling out surveys and taking part in group discussions.

### ***Comprehensive Methamphetamine Control Act of 1996***

The Comprehensive Methamphetamine Control Act of 1996 was passed unanimously in Congress and signed into law by President Clinton on Oct. 3, 1996. This act augmented DEA’s effort to control precursor chemicals and lab equipment used to produce methamphetamine. Several provisions of this Act had an impact on DEA operations:

1. Restricting access to precursor chemicals such as iodine, red phosphorous and hydrochloric gas used to make methamphetamine, and tightening controls on the sale of pseudoephedrine, phenylpropanolamine, and ephedrine combination products, all common ingredients found in over-the-counter diet pills and cold medicines.



*During an August 1998 visit to Colombia, Administrator Constantine and General Serrano met with a wounded Colombian National Police officer who survived an attack by a rebel group against Colombian anti-narcotics headquarters. (Photo courtesy of Semana Publicaciones.)*



*In March 1997, DEA Ft. Worth and DEA Midland, TX offices jointly investigated a large-scale drug smuggling operation and seized 2,175 pounds of marijuana in Odessa, TX.*



2. Tracking mail-order purchases of precursor chemicals.
3. Establishing civil penalties of up to \$250,000 for firms that distribute laboratory supplies with “reckless disregard” for the illegal purposes for which the supplies might be used.
4. Doubling the maximum criminal penalty to 20 years in jail for possession of chemicals or equipment used to make methamphetamine.
5. Increasing penalties for trafficking and manufacturing methamphetamine or its precursor chemicals.
6. Directing the Attorney General to coordinate international drug enforcement efforts to reduce trafficking in methamphetamine and its precursor chemicals.
7. Making it a crime to manufacture precursor chemicals outside the U.S. with the intent to smuggle them into the country.
8. Allowing courts to order restitution for the extensive costs (often as much as \$8,000) associated with the clean-up of methamphetamine labs and for any person injured as a result of the lab’s operation.
9. Creating the Methamphetamine Interagency Task Force to design and implement methamphetamine education, prevention, and treatment strategies and establishing an advisory board to educate chemical companies to identify suspicious transactions.

### ***Purple Heart Awards (1996)***

The Hispanic Advisory Committee suggested to the Administrator the establishment of an award to honor the “thousands of men and women sworn to enforce the drug laws of the U.S. who deserve the full benefit of our recognition of the inherent dangers of our profession.”

In response to that suggestion, the DEA Purple Heart Award was instituted.

As of Jan. 1, 1996, any DEA Agent wounded in the line of duty became eligible to receive the DEA’s new Purple Heart Award. Based on the design of the military’s Purple Heart Award presented for battle injuries, the DEA emblem honors agents who suffered injuries that required medical treatment or caused death and were in-

curred during the performance of official duties as the direct result of a hostile or criminal action.

The heart-shaped pendant, with a DEA Special Agent’s badge embossed on a purple background, is suspended from a red, white, and blue ribbon. The award is presented in a glass-front shadow-box and was accompanied by a lapel pin in a smaller version of the pendant. With the creation of this award, DEA established an appropriate and significant way to recognize those employees who were injured while confronting the everyday dangers faced by those in drug law enforcement.

In 1998, DEA’s SAC Advisory Committee expanded the awarding of Purple Hearts to state and local law enforcement officers killed or wounded in the line of duty while working with DEA.

### ***Operations Reciprocity and Limelight (1996)***

Two investigations in the late 1990s demonstrated that Mexico-based drug traffickers had displaced some of the Colombia-based cocaine organizations that had traditionally dominated the New York City cocaine traffic.

During a highway interdiction stop on Oct. 30, 1996, near Tyler, TX, two state troopers discovered over \$2 million in cash concealed in a van heading south. This stop was the first seizure linked to Operation Reciprocity. On December 3, investigators seized 5.3 tons of cocaine from a Tucson, AZ, warehouse. Evidence linked the warehouse operation to a Los Angeles investigation, a New York operation, a Michigan transportation group, and a trafficking cell connected to the Carrillo-Fuentes organization. On December 13, the same state troopers stopped a tractor trailer truck in Tyler, TX, and seized 2,700 pounds of marijuana from a hidden compartment in the ceiling of the vehicle. The investigation revealed that traffickers were smuggling cocaine to the New York City area in concealed compartments in the roofs of tractor trailer trucks and in hollowed-out five-foot tall stacks of plywood. The same trucks were being used to transport the cash in kilo-sized packages of \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills, back to Mexico.

On April 9, 1997, the U.S. Customs Service found \$5.6 million in street cash hidden in a tractor trailer truck ceiling compartment in an Operation Reciprocity seizure in El Paso, TX. This operation resulted in 41 arrests, as well as the seizure of seven tons of cocaine, 2,800 pounds of marijuana, and more than \$11



*Left: The DEA Purple Heart award.*

*Below: Operation Reciprocity investigators found \$5.6 million in street money hidden in this ceiling compartment of a truck during the El Paso seizure on April 9, 1997.*



million. Meanwhile, an investigation initiated by DEA's Imperial County, California Resident Office in August 1996 developed into Operation Limelight, which involved several state, local, and U.S. Treasury agencies, including the IRS and the U.S. Customs Service. The investigation focused on the Alberto Beltran transportation and distribution cell, which was part of the Carrillo-Fuentes organization.

Operation Limelight resulted in the arrest of 48 people and the seizure of over 4,000 kilos of cocaine, over 10,800 pounds of marijuana, and over \$7.3 million. State and federal investigators believed this Beltran cell was responsible for the monthly smuggling of at least 1.5 tons of cocaine, typically concealed in crates of vegetables and fruits and trucked across the U.S. by Mexican nationals.

In March 1996, the head of the Beltran organization in the U.S., Gerardo Gonzalez, was arrested by Operation Limelight investigators. The arrest was the result of the "carrot case," which also led to the New York seizure of 1,630 kilograms of cocaine hidden in a 30-ton shipment of chopped up carrots used for horse feed. At that time, the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force also seized \$1.3 million and arrested nine organization members. Eight more members of the organization, including Gonzalez's wife, were arrested on Aug. 1, 1997, in the second phase of this investigation.

### ***Legalization in California and Arizona (1996)***

In the early 1990s, as many communities were overrun by crime and violence, a small, but vocal group of people believed that the legalization of drugs would reduce drug abuse, lessen the violence, and restore peace to our cities. Because the DEA believed that legalization would exacerbate the drug problem, not solve it, the agency sponsored a forum in 1994 on the issue of how police chiefs and others could address arguments calling for the legalization of drugs. The findings of that conference were published in a manual that police chiefs and others used to speak out against the legalization issue.

In 1996, powerful, wealthy special interest organizations pushed for the legalization of marijuana, and in California and Arizona, they were successful in putting the issue before the voters. Through slick advertising media campaigns, voters were led to believe that the initiative would simply allow medical doctors to treat terminally ill and suffering patients with marijuana for the relief of pain symptoms. In Arizona, voters were led to believe that this proposition included provisions to toughen criminal justice systems.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) released resolutions that officially expressed the group's opposition to the propositions in Arizona and California to legalize marijuana. In these resolutions the IACP stated the grounds for its objections: marijuana is more carcinogenic than tobacco and other Schedule I drugs; it compromises brain functions, the immune system, the lungs, and hormonal responses to stress and metabolic changes; and makes diseases such as tuberculosis, asthma, and multiple sclerosis worse. The IACP also maintained that marijuana did not prevent blindness due to glaucoma and that no national health organization had accepted marijuana as medicine. In addition, the resolutions contained a list of organizations that asserted that marijuana had not been scientifically proven to be safe or effective as a medicine. These organizations included: the American Medical Association, American Cancer Society,

National Multiple Sclerosis Association, American Academy of Ophthalmology, National Eye Institute, National Cancer Institute, National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Strokes, National Institute of Dental Research, and the National Institute on Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

Unfortunately, despite such widespread objections, the propositions passed in both states. California's Proposition 215 allowed anyone who received a doctor's recommendation to possess and use marijuana for cancer, AIDS, glaucoma and "any other illness for which marijuana provides relief." It allowed doctors to verbally "recommend" marijuana use to minors, prisoners, individuals in sensitive positions, or anyone who claimed to have a medical condition. The proposition, by extension, also allowed individuals to smoke and cultivate marijuana openly, on the premise that marijuana had been recommended for the individual's medical condition.

The Arizona proposition was more restrictive than the California version in that a physician had to cite a study confirming the proven medical benefits of the Schedule I drug and provide a written prescription which was kept in the patient's medical file, and the patient was required to obtain a written opinion from a second physician confirming that the prescription for the Schedule I substance was "appropriate to treat a disease or to relieve the pain and suffering of a seriously ill patient or terminally ill patient." The Arizona proposition, however, also provided for other actions that erode effective, tough drug policies, including the release of prisoners previously convicted of personal possession or use of a controlled substance.

Despite the differences between the two ballot initiatives, there was an indisputable similarity: both states allowed individuals to possess substances that have no legitimate medical use. Both California and Arizona, despite what the proponents claimed, had taken the first steps toward the proponents' ultimate goal of legalizing drugs. Based on the success of legalization proponents in California and Arizona, campaigns for legalization began to organize in other states.

### ***Operation Zorro II***

As part of the Southwest Border Initiative that was launched in 1994, the Zorro II investigation targeted Mexico-based cocaine smuggling and distribution organizations, as well as the partnership groups based in Colombia. Working together, these organizations were responsible for importing and distributing almost six metric tons of cocaine throughout the U.S.

Zorro II illustrated the close and efficient partnership that existed between the drug organizations from Mexico and Colombia. More importantly, this case showed that the international drug trade was a seamless continuum, a criminal enterprise that stretched, without interruption, from the jungles of South America—across transit zones, such as Mexico—to the cities and communities of the U.S.

Zorro II was particularly important because, for the first time, law enforcement dismantled not only a Colombian organization that produced the cocaine, but also the organization in Mexico that provided the transportation. During the course of the 8-month investigation, law enforcement officers coordinated and shared information gleaned from more than 90 court-authorized wiretaps. The operation involved 10 federal agencies, 42 state and local agencies, and 14 DEA field divisions across the country. As a result of the investigation, over \$17 million and almost 5,600 ki-



los of cocaine were seized, and 156 people were arrested. Zorro II confirmed that Mexico-based traffickers were not just transporters, but had their own distribution networks throughout the U.S.

### ***Billion Dollar Budget (1997)***

In 1997, DEA achieved its first-ever billion dollar direct appropriation budget. This \$1.054 billion budget was approximately \$200 million, or 23 percent, greater than the DEA's 1996 budget, which had been the previous all-time high budget. That the DEA's funding would increase in a time of fiscal belt-tightening was a tribute to the outstanding work that DEA personnel were performing worldwide and to DEA's many achievements in 1996. The DEA's fiscal year (FY) 1997 appropriation contained significant resources aimed at restoring the agency's source country drug trafficking programs to FY 1992 funding levels. DEA also received \$29 million in the 1997 appropriations for construction of a DEA Training Center at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA.

### ***Jose Ivan Duarte (1997)***

In 1982, Jose Ivan Duarte and his conspirator Rene Benitez were hired by Colombian drug traffickers to plan and execute the kidnaping of DEA Special Agents Charles Martinez and Kelly McCullough. The agents were taken from their hotel in Cartagena, Colombia, and were transported by car to a secluded area 15 miles away. Agent Martinez was shot for the first time while still within city limits. Then Duarte and Benitez stopped the car and shot Martinez again. At that point Agent McCullough fled. He was shot as he ran into the jungle. SA Martinez escaped when his captors' gun jammed as they attempted to shoot him for a third time. Both SA Martinez and SA McCullough managed to escape despite their wounds. They reached Cartagena the next day and phoned the U.S. Embassy for assistance. They were airlifted out of the country by a U.S. Air Force plane from Panama.

Both Duarte and Benitez eluded capture. Warrants for their arrests were issued in June 1982. Benitez was eventually captured in Colombia, extradited, and imprisoned in Miami in 1995. Duarte continued to evade authorities until August 1997, when he was detained in Ecuador. The Ecuadorian government expelled the fugitive and he was then transported to the U.S. to stand trial. His capture marked the end of a 15-year investigation and search. According to Administrator Constantine, "Duarte's expulsion by the Ecuadorian government shows great courage and commitment to battling drugs."

### ***DEA/Wal-Mart Partnership (1997)***

As part of the nation's continuing efforts against the production of methamphetamine, on April 9, 1997, DEA and Wal-Mart formed a partnership to control large-scale purchases of three over-the-counter products—pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, and phenyl-propranolamine—used in clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine and amphetamine. Wal-Mart, one of the nation's largest employers, implemented a chain-wide policy limiting sales of these allergy, cold, and diet products. The cash registers of Wal-Mart stores across the country were programmed to limit sales to 3-6 packages of these items per customer. In addition, they discontinued the 100-count bottle of their brand of pseudoephedrine tablets that had been found at illegal labs and replaced them with small-count blister packs. Wal-Mart's initia-

tive also limited the sale of blister packs, which were generally exempt from federal regulations. Wal-Mart's initiative dovetailed with federal regulations stipulated under the second phase of the Methamphetamine Control Act of 1996.

### ***DEA Heroin Conference (1997)***

The use of heroin increased significantly in the U.S. in the mid-1990s. The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) statistics for 1995 reported heroin to be second only to cocaine in terms of hospital incidents. DAWN statistics showed the annual number of heroin-related emergency room mentions increased from 33,384 in 1990 to 76,023 in 1995. In addition, the number of heroin overdose deaths nationally rose from 4,188 in 1994, to 4,625 in 1995. Purity levels also rose from 7 percent in 1985 to 40 percent in 1995. In some areas, particularly the Northeast, 80-90 percent purity was reported.

The heroin problem grew worse as South America began to play a bigger role in heroin trafficking. Soon, heroin from South America dominated the East Coast and accounted for the majority of heroin seized by DEA. Another reason why heroin use increased was that drug dealers were actively marketing their product. In order to increase demand for heroin, drug traffickers began to include free samples of heroin in shipments of cocaine. This marketing scheme introduced heroin to cocaine dealers and abusers.

In response to this growing problem, Administrator Constantine held a National Heroin Conference in February 1997 in Reston, VA. In attendance were more than 300 federal, state, local, and international law enforcement officials, as well as demand reduction/prevention experts. The conferees gathered to assess the heroin threat to the U.S. and share effective strategies for addressing the problem.

Included in the submitted 26 recommendations were the following:

1. Develop a national media campaign against heroin use;
2. Support the development of community-based educational/awareness drug campaigns;
3. Increase law enforcement and interdiction training regarding heroin concealment and transportation;
4. Enhance the Heroin Signature Program and Domestic Monitor Program;
5. Bolster interagency intelligence sharing; and
6. Identify a national heroin strategy.

### ***National Drug Pointer Index (1997)***

For many years, state and local law enforcement envisioned a drug pointer system that would allow them to determine if other law enforcement organizations were investigating the same drug suspect. Despite the existence of some statewide and regional drug pointer systems, none extended to national participation. At the direction of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, DEA took the lead in the development of a national drug pointer system to assist federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in investigating drug trafficking organizations.

### ***The DEA Survivors' Benefit Fund (1998)***

In April 1998, Administrator Constantine announced the creation of the DEA Survivors' Benefit Fund. The fund was established to assist the surviving family members of DEA employees

and task force officers killed in the line of duty. The fund also supported programs that preserved the memory of those killed in the line of duty. In addition, the benefit fund provided financial assistance for family members of employees who died as a result of non-job-related causes. The Survivors' Benefit Fund was created by combining existing organizations, namely, the Enrique Camarena Fund in Miami; the Seema/Montoya Fund in Los Angeles; the Rick Finley Memorial Foundation in Detroit, the Richard Fass Foundation in Phoenix; and the New York Drug Enforcement Agents Scholarship Foundation. Respectively, these foundations had been established to honor Enrique Camarena, who was kidnapped and murdered by drug traffickers in Mexico in 1985; Special Agents Paul S. Seema and George M. Montoya, who were both killed while performing an undercover operation in Los Angeles in 1988; Special Agent Rick Finley, who was killed in a plane crash in 1989 while returning from a DEA operation in Peru; and Special Agent Richard Fass, who was killed while performing an undercover methamphetamine investigation in 1994. Many of these organizations held annual events to raise funds to support the families of DEA agents killed in the line of duty. Representatives of these various funds agreed to come together to support one national fund, realizing that this would enable them to assist more people. Each fund was also able to maintain a separate identity by continuing to hold individual annual fund raisers. Financial support for the Survivors' Benefit Fund came from donations by the general public, as well as profits from the various fund raising events held across the country.

### *Justice Training Center*

Since 1985, the DEA and FBI had shared training facilities at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. With the expansion of both agencies and with increasingly complex training requirements for DEA special agents, the need for additional space became critical. In May 1991, a study was completed by the Department of Justice that indicated that the best and most efficient way to satisfy the training needs of both the DEA and FBI was to pursue an expansion at Quantico. The securing of necessary funding to construct a new training center became a major priority of Mr. Constantine when he was appointed Administrator. Congress

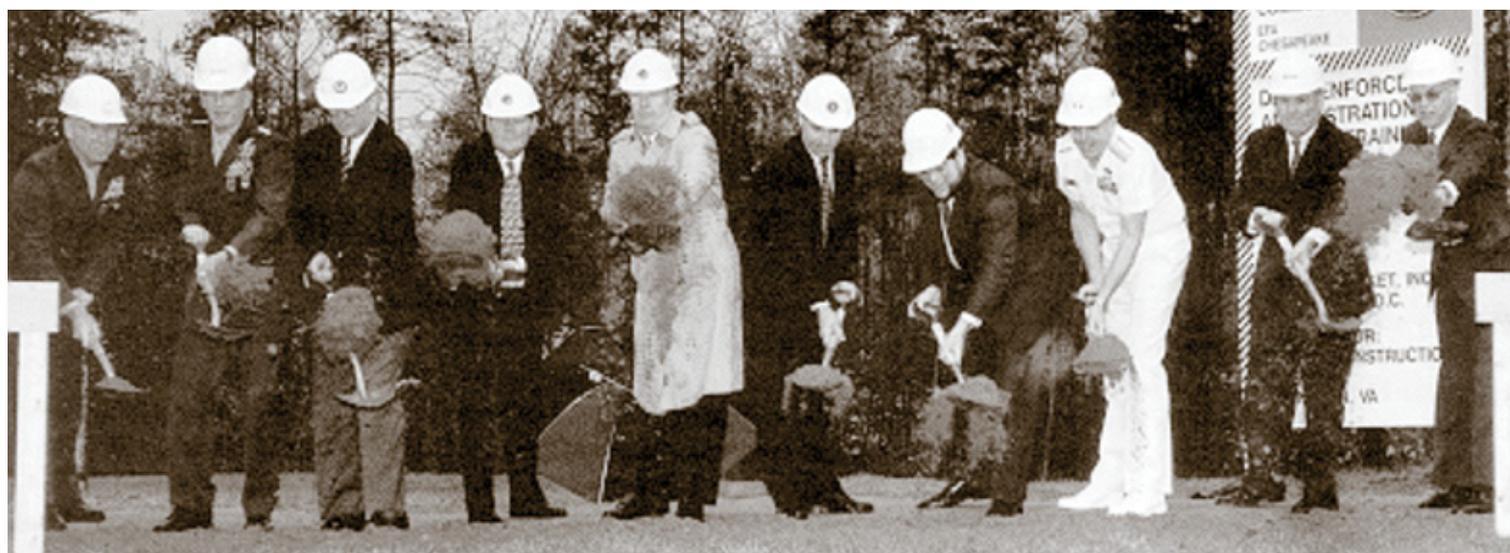
provided funding for a new training academy in the FY 1997 appropriations. The \$29 million academy, called the Justice Training Center, was constructed on land made available to DEA by the Marine Corps and located within the FBI complex. The new center enables the DEA to provide state-of-the-art training for DEA basic agents, state and local law enforcement officials, and international law enforcement counterparts. It was designed to house a 250-bed, double occupancy dormitory, classrooms, office space for staff, a cafeteria, and an international training room equipped for simultaneous translations. Adjacent to the new academy is a special facility for clandestine laboratory training. Special purpose facilities—ranges, a driver training course, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, and an auditorium—will continue to be shared with the FBI. Construction on the new center began in April 1997 and was completed in April 1999.

A new curriculum was planned for all training courses. In March 1998, Administrator Constantine commissioned the Office of Training to conduct a review of all DEA training programs, from entry-level basic agent training to specialized and supervisory/management training. This review was requested in anticipation of the completion and subsequent opening of the Justice Training Center in order to ensure that each training program was current and state-of-the-art. This review was conducted by a team of selected supervisory and special agents from the field, diversion investigators, chemists, DEA headquarters personnel, and members of the training staff. This team completed the training review and offered its suggestions in June 1998.

### *Training*

Upon taking office in 1994, DEA Administrator Constantine requested a review of DEA's training curriculum to ensure that state-of-the-art procedures and techniques were being provided in all DEA training. The goal was to have every DEA employee fully trained and prepared to operate successfully in the ever-changing environment of drug law enforcement. As a result of the re-evaluation of training procedures, a number of significant changes were instituted:

- Training programs for basic agents, diversion investigators, intelligence analysts, and chemists were required to



*Breaking ground on the new DEA training academy, April 21, 1997. Pictured from left: Brig. Gen. Edwin C. Kelley, Lt. Gen. Paul K. Van Riper, Mr. Benjamin F. Burrell, SAC David Westrate, Administrator Thomas A. Constantine, FBI Director Louis J. Freeh, Mr. Steven S. Honigman, Rear Adm. David J. Nash, Mr. Harold J. Parmelee, and Mr. Everett Medling.*



devote more time to legal issues, integrity, and personal responsibility.

- Basic agent training was extended to 16 weeks. Also, in order to support the increased emphasis on personal responsibility, DEA structured 25 hours of formal ethics and integrity sessions into the basic agent training program. These “life training” sessions emphasized the positive aspects of integrity and police ethics and equipped new agents with the moral tools needed to successfully tackle ethical dilemmas.
- The Field Training Agent Program was instituted to provide continuous training and direction to probationary agents after completing basic agent training.
- An in-service training course, to be held every 18 months, was developed for all core series employees. The program stressed reviews of internal regulations, oral and written communication skills, legal issues, case law, operational and tactical procedures, integrity, and personnel issues, such as sexual harassment. The course also included an ethics curriculum similar to that used for basic agent training.
- A Training Advisory Committee, which met twice a year, was established to assess the training curriculum and increase field input into specific training programs.

From 1995 to September 1998, DEA trained 1,586 basic agents, and from 1994 to September 1998, over 110,000 state and local law enforcement officers.

### ***Aviation***

Compared with its 1971 aviation budget of \$58,000, the Air Wing’s 1998 operating budget of \$24,400,000 covered a fleet of 98 aircraft and 108 special agents/pilots. On a daily basis, Air Wing personnel work in close support of domestic offices and provide sophisticated electronic, air-based surveillance.

### ***Creation of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Field Division: El Paso (1998)***

Because of its proximity to the Southwest Border, the El Paso, TX, region was an area that experienced a great deal of drug trafficking. For this reason, The FBI and the U.S. Customs Service established field divisions in the El Paso region. In order to focus on the drug problem on the U.S.-Mexican border and to better cooperate with other federal law enforcement efforts in that area, Administrator Constantine requested the creation of an El Paso Field Division. This request became a reality in June 1998, and the El Paso Field Division became DEA’s 22<sup>nd</sup> Field Division. The reorganization realigned the former El Paso District Office from the Houston Division; the Alpine, TX, Resident Office from the Dallas Division; the Albuquerque, NM, District Office from the Denver Division. It also realigned the Las Cruces, NM, Resident Office from the Denver Division to the new El Paso Division. In addition, the reorganization transferred the responsibility for the Billings, MT, Resident Office from the Seattle Division to the Denver Division. By establishing the El Paso Division, adjoining geographical areas facing a common drug threat were combined under a single authority. With a separate field division to manage the El Paso region, DEA focused directly on the significant drug threat facing the West Texas and New Mexico areas, thereby enhancing the agency’s effectiveness along the entire Southwest Border.

### ***Technology***

In late 1995, DEA replaced its aging office automation system (UNISYS BTOS) with a network of Pentium-grade personal computers. This system, known as “Firebird,” represented a major effort to improve the DEA’s automated infrastructure (\$150 million) through establishment of a secure, centralized computer network that standardized the DEA’s investigative reporting system, case file inventories, administrative functions, and electronic communications. Firebird was made available at DEA headquarters and all 22 division offices, and allowed access to the electronic headquarters file-room, easy access to the DEA community through electronic mail and bulletin boards, and use of a common suite of office automation functions. These capabilities increased user productivity and provided improved access to many automated tools essential to investigative activities. Plans were also made to install Firebird in the 180 DEA field offices, El Paso Intelligence Center, Air Wing, Laboratories, and several overseas offices.

Two of the major on-line resources available to DEA employees were Webster and IMPACT. Webster was the familiar name for the DEA Electronic Library project. As the core of the DEA’s “intranet,” its objectives included building an electronic library for distributing official, up-to-date documents and news, providing secure access to DEA users worldwide via Firebird and Department of Justice mainframe/Televue that allowed full-text search and retrieval and assisted DEA in expanding its presence on the public internet. The second on-line resource was the Investigative Management Program and Case Tracking (IMPACT) system, which was initiated in 1996. This program was a mission-oriented, field-led initiative that focused on the collection, use, and dissemination of case-related information at the field level with the emphasis on the group supervisor and agent.

In 1988, DEA awarded a contract to investigate and evaluate a preliminary Intelligence Analyst Workstation that would assist intelligence analysts in developing their reports. This project evolved into the third on-line resource, Merlin—a system that supports the classified processing needs of intelligence analysts and special agents. Merlin was deployed to DEA headquarters, the Special Operations Division, and the Houston, San Diego, and the Los Angeles Field Divisions. The Merlin project plan called for seven additional divisions and one foreign office to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2000.

### ***Laboratories***

DEA laboratories continued to use the latest in forensic science technology to aid DEA investigations. Beginning in the 1980s, technology used by DEA saw a quantum leap in microprocessor and computer technology. DEA laboratories engaged in extensive programs to convert to state-of-the-art instrumentation. For example, the outdated vacuum sweep apparatus that was used to collect traces of material for later laboratory analysis was replaced by the Ionscan. The Ionscan unit was a portable instrument that was used to both collect trace materials and provided preliminary on-the-spot identification. In 1994 alone, the Ionscan unit was used to develop evidence in cases that led to the seizure of 22 vehicles, 19 buildings, two aircraft, and over \$350,000 in cash.

In 1995, the Department of Justice Inspector General conducted a study of the DEA Laboratory System. In a survey of all DEA and FBI field offices, U.S. Attorney’s Offices, and Orga-

nized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces, 96 percent of the respondents expressed their overall satisfaction with the DEA's laboratory services. "The DEA is justifiably proud of the contributions made by all laboratory system employees to maintain such a high level of accomplishment," stated Aaron Hatcher, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of Forensic Science.

DEA continued to upgrade and expand its laboratory facilities. In 1994, a new lab, the North Central Laboratory, was built in Chicago. In 1998, DEA planned to build new replacement labs to update the Mid-Atlantic Lab in Washington, D.C., the Southeast Lab in Miami, the Southwest Lab in San Diego, the Western Lab in San Francisco, and the Special Testing and Research Lab

in McLean, VA. These expansions were necessary to accommodate staffing increases. The new Special Testing and Research, Mid-Atlantic and Southeast labs were scheduled to begin operation during the last quarter of 2000; while a schedule for the openings of the new Western, Southwest, and South Central labs had not yet been established. Funding for such expansions was provided by Congress.

DEA further expanded its laboratory capabilities by developing mobile labs. Mobile labs, small laboratories that were driven from site to site, enabled DEA forensic chemists to conduct on-the-spot analysis of seized drugs. Analyzing drugs at the scene of the seizure accelerated the prosecution of drug traffickers and provided intelligence that identified other drug activity in the local area.



*The Jay Leno Show honors members from the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association Annual Conference, including employees of DEA.*