



NEWS RELEASE

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16 Charged in Major Drug Ring

17th Judicial District Attorney Dave Young announced Tuesday that 16 people have been charged in connection with a major drug ring operating in the north metro area.

“This is another successful investigation as a result of our drug prosecution unit where we continue to take major drug dealers out of the community,” said District Attorney Dave Young.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Front Range Drug Task Force and local law enforcement in conjunction with the 17th Judicial District Attorney's Office executed search warrants early last Thursday as part of an investigation into a cocaine distribution organization operating in the Denver metro area. The criminal enterprise is charged with distribution of significant amounts of cocaine and prescription drugs in the metro area. Homes in Thornton, Commerce City, Lakewood and Arvada were targets.

The investigation began in September of 2015. The charges allege criminal conduct that took place between September 2015 and June 2016.

More than a half pound of cocaine, large amounts of prescription drugs, \$30,000 in cash and weapons were seized from the homes. Fourteen people were arrested at the homes and other locations. Two defendants remain at large.

Four defendants are charged with racketeering and operating a criminal enterprise in violation of the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act (COCCA). They include Carlo A. Nieto (DOB 11/7/85), Cynthia Orozco (DOB 4/16/81), and Arturo Valenzuela (DOB 9/13/78). A fourth COCCA defendant is at large. Orozco and Valenzuela are held on \$250,000 bond. Nieto is held on \$25,000 bond.

Orozco, of Commerce City, is charged with one count of COCCA racketeering, one count of COCCA conspiracy (F2), three counts of conspiracy to distribute, and 19 counts of distribution of a controlled substance.

Valenzuela, of Thornton, is charged with one count of COCCA racketeering, one count of COCCA conspiracy (F2), and 14 drug charges of distribution or conspiracy to distribute a controlled

substance.

Carlo Nieto, of Lakewood, is charged with one count of COCCA racketeering (F2), one count of COCCA conspiracy (F2) and four charges of distribution or conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance.

Charges against the other 12 defendants include possession of controlled substances, distribution of controlled substances and conspiracy.

The filing of a criminal charge is merely a formal accusation that an individual committed a crime under Colorado laws. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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