



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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Case #: 23HF0672

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**Arizona Correctional Officer who serves in Army National Guard
Charged with Smuggling 23 Kilos of Methamphetamine,
1 Kilo of Heroin Across United States-Mexico Border with Wife, Three
Kids**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – An Arizona correctional officer who also serves as an Army National Guardsman has been charged with multiple felonies for smuggling 23 kilos of methamphetamine and one kilo of heroin across the United States-Mexico border with his wife and three children in the vehicle. Authorities do not believe his wife or children were aware of the illegal drug trafficking.

Fernando Urrutiaguillen, 34, of Chandler, Arizona, has been charged with two felony counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell, two felony counts of sale or transport of a controlled substance, two felony enhancements of a controlled substance in excess of 20 kilograms, and two felony enhancements of possession of a substance exceeding one kilogram.

He faces a maximum sentence of 21 years and four months if convicted on all counts. He has pleaded not guilty.

Urrutiaguillen is currently being held at the Orange County Jail in lieu of \$3 million bail.

On Tuesday, April 18, Urrutiaguillen was pulled over by the California Highway Patrol on the northbound 1-5 freeway at Sand Canyon in Irvine. During the traffic stop, the CHP officer became suspicious and during a search of the vehicle a K-9 alerted to the presence of drugs in the vehicle.

Urrutiaguillen is accused of having the drugs stashed inside of his vehicle's gas tank in Mexico and then driving across the border and into California.

Authorities discovered 23 kilos of methamphetamine and one kilo of heroin inside of the gas tank.

Urrutiaguillen is employed as a correctional officer in a private prison in Arizona.

“This individual not only put his wife and three young children in incredible danger, he put another black mark on every upstanding law enforcement officer who works tirelessly to protect Americans from the very drug dealers he was doing business with,” said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. “The Orange County District Attorney’s Office refuses to let drug dealers get away with trafficking illicit drugs across our borders – and we refuse to allow a correctional officer get away with leading a double life making money as a drug trafficker one day and keeping watch over drug dealers behind bars the next.

Deputy District Attorney Patrick Moss of the Narcotics Enforcement Team (NET) is prosecuting this case.

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