



## U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer Indicted on Drug Trafficking Charges

McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)

Submitted at 11:26 AM September 27, 2011

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on September 26, 2011 released the following:

“TUCSON, AZ— A federal grand jury in Tucson has returned a four-count superseding indictment against U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer (CBPO) Luis Carlos Vasquez, 32; Victor Stuppi, 40; Jesus Antonio Chavez-Bustamante, 25; and Karla Beatriz Prieto, 23, all of Douglas, Ariz; and Saul Lizarraga-Roldan, 37; and Marcos Abraham Sandoval-Lizarraga, 22, both of Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana, possession with intent to distribute marijuana, conspiracy to import marijuana and importation of marijuana.

The indictment alleges that CBPO Vasquez conspired with the others named in the indictment to import marijuana through the Douglas Port of Entry (POE) while Vasquez was working an inspection lane. It is also alleged that on June 17, 2011, while Vasquez was working an inspection lane at the Douglas POE, he knowingly allowed 547 kilograms of marijuana to pass through his inspection lane in a Chevrolet Avalanche.

“Law enforcement officials must be held to a higher standard of conduct,” stated Acting U.S. Attorney Ann Birmingham Scheel. “In the rare and regrettable circumstance where a sworn officer crosses the line into criminal conduct and violates their oath and the public’s trust, they will be brought to justice.”

### Kentucky Doctor Pays U.S. \$349,860 to Settle False Claims Act Allegations

(USDOJ: Justice News)

Submitted at 10:14 AM September 27, 2011

Louisville, Ky., physician Dr. Steven H. Stern and his practice, Kentuckiana Center for Better Bone and Joint Health PLLC have agreed to pay \$349,860 to settle allegations of overbilling Medicare.

Vasquez was arrested on Friday, September, 23, 2011, and had his initial appearance today in federal court in Tucson. Vasquez was released pending trial on a \$100,000 personal appearance bond. Stuppi has been released on a \$50,000 personal appearance bond, Prieto has been released pending trial, Chavez-Bustamante and Lizarraga-Roldan have been detained pending trial and Sandoval-Lizarraga remains at large.

“This indictment signifies a collaborative effort by the FBI’s Border Corruption Task Force,” stated FBI Special Agent in Charge James L. Turgal Jr., Phoenix Division. “When a law enforcement officer participates in drug trafficking it taints the badge and memory of all those in law enforcement who risk their lives every day to uphold our laws and serve the public with trust and honor. The FBI, alongside our law enforcement partners, will continue to aggressively pursue those responsible for corruption along the border and those who violate the public’s trust.”

A conviction for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 40 years’ imprisonment with a mandatory minimum term of five years, a \$5,000,000 fine or both. Possession with intent to distribute marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 40 years’ imprisonment with a mandatory minimum term of five years, a \$5,000,000 fine or both. Conspiracy to import marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 40 years’ imprisonment with a mandatory minimum term of five years, a \$5,000,000 fine or both. Importation of marijuana carries a maximum penalty of 40 years’

### Two Miami-Area Residents Plead Guilty in \$25 Million Health Care Fraud Scheme

(USDOJ: Justice News)

Submitted at 9:58 AM September 27, 2011

Maritza Vidal, 44, and Richard Diaz, 26, each pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joan A. Lenard to one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud.

imprisonment with a mandatory minimum term of five years, a \$5,000,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge David C. Bury will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply a method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that established guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by FBI-Sierra Vista, ICE Office of Professional Responsibility, the FBI’s Southern Arizona Corruption Task Force, and the Douglas Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Joshua C. Mellor, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-11-2486-TUC-DCB”

To find additional federal criminal news, please read [Federal Crimes Watch Daily](#).

Douglas McNabb and other members of the U.S. law firm practice and write and/or report extensively on matters involving Federal Criminal Defense, INTERPOL Red Notice Removal, International Extradition and OFAC SDN Sanctions Removal.

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### President of Virginia-based Connection Newspapers Sentenced to Six Months in Prison for Failing to Pay Employment Taxes

(USDOJ: Justice News)

Submitted at 11:50 AM September 27, 2011

Peter Labovitz of Alexandria, Va., was sentenced to six months in prison for failing to pay employment taxes to the Internal Revenue Service.



# Robert R. Prondzinski Pleaded Guilty to Two Counts of Bank Fraud in Federal Court

*McNabb Associates, P.C. (Federal Criminal Defense Lawyers)*

Submitted at 11:20 AM September 27, 2011

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on September 26, 2011 released the following:

“Former Visalia Business Owner Pleads Guilty to Bank Fraud

FRESNO, CA— United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner announced that Robert R. Prondzinski, 62, formerly of Visalia, pleaded guilty today before Senior United States District Judge Oliver W. Wanger to two counts of bank fraud relating to forged loan documents he submitted to Bank of the Sierra.

According to the guilty plea, Prondzinski admitted that between November 2001 and December 2005, he applied for business loans with Bank of the Sierra for his former company, R&E Produce Sales Inc., of Visalia. Prondzinski repeatedly forged his then-wife’s signature on personal guaranties and credit applications, and submitted the documents with forged signatures to Bank of the Sierra. This conduct increased the likelihood of securing business loans and lines of credit from Bank of the Sierra. As a result, Bank of the Sierra lost \$175,000.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Henry Z. Carbajal III is prosecuting the case.

Prondzinski is scheduled to be sentenced on December 19, 2011. He faces a maximum statutory penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables.”

To find additional federal criminal news, please read [Federal Crimes Watch Daily](#).

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