

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

USDC EDWI  
FILED IN GREEN BAY DIV  
AUG 27 2012  
AT \_\_\_\_\_ O'CLOCK \_\_\_\_\_ M  
JON W. SANFILIPPO

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

v.

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

CASE NUMBER: 12-m-686

**Maria Blanca Garcia,  
Miguel Sanchez-Garcia,  
Pedro Enfante-Ramirez,  
Guillermo Chavez-Carrion,  
Jose Alfredo Sierra-Aguilar,  
Juan Carlos Cervantes Contreras, and**  
[REDACTED]

I, Steven Curran, the undersigned complainant being duly sworn state the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Between June 1, 2012 and August 25, 2012, in the State and Eastern District of Wisconsin, the above-named individuals knowingly and intentionally conspired among themselves and with others to manufacture and possess with the intent to distribute marijuana, a Schedule I controlled substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, §§ 846, 841(a)(1), and 841(b)(1)(A). The offense involved more than 1,000 marijuana plants.

I further state that I am a Special Agent assigned to the Drug Enforcement Administration, and that this complaint is based on the facts contained in the attached affidavit.

Continued on the attached sheet and made a part hereof:  Yes



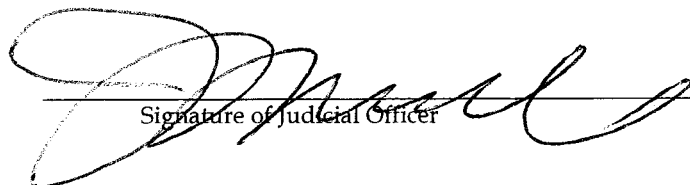
Signature of Complainant

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence,

August 27, 2012  
Date

at Green Bay, Wisconsin  
City and State

James R. Sickel, U.S. Magistrate Judge  
Name & Title of Judicial Officer



Signature of Judicial Officer

## AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

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I, Steven B. Curran, being first duly sworn on oath, depose and state as follows:

1. I am employed as a Special Agent with the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and have been so employed since August of 2000. As a Special Agent, I have received specialized training in controlled substance investigations. Additionally, I have been a law enforcement officer since June of 1988.

2. As part of my duties as a Special Agent, I assist state and local drug enforcement agencies by gathering intelligence information about persons involved in controlled substance violations and investigating state and federal drug crimes.

3. This affidavit is based on my experience and background as a law enforcement officer; conversations held with agents and investigators of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Wisconsin Division of Criminal Investigations (DCI), and the United States Forest Service (USFS); physical surveillance; Administrative Subpoenas, and on information obtained through public sources such as CLEAR.

4. During my time of employment with the DEA, I have become familiar with the operations of Drug Trafficking Organizations as well as outdoor marijuana grows in general. This familiarity has come from researching reports from other DEA cases on DTO marijuana grows that have occurred in the states of Washington, Oregon, California, and Utah; interviews of defendants who provided detailed information regarding their involvement in large marijuana grows, interview reports of suspects who have provided details of the methods used by marijuana DTO's; lengthy conversations with several DEA Agents and Task Force Officers with experience dismantling DTO marijuana grows on public and private lands, training videos that were provided by law enforcement personnel and personally dismantling DTO marijuana grows.

5. Based on my training and experience, I know that outdoor marijuana grows have many of the following characteristics:

- a. Located in remote areas;
- b. Located near water sources;
- c. Located in an area with tree cover;
- d. Select trees are often cut off approximately 3-4 feet from the ground to allow sunlight to reach the marijuana plants;
- e. On private land, “No Trespassing” signs are often posted to keep the general public away from the property;
- f. Trees that are cut down are utilized to make shelters which are used to live in and also used to process marijuana;
- g. Hoses or plastic tubing are utilized to transfer water from a water source (pond or river) to the grow site; and
- h. a re-supply point.

6. Persons living inside the marijuana grow sites often never leave the grow sites until after the plants have been harvested. These persons rely on persons, commonly referred to as “luncheros”, to deliver food and marijuana growing supplies (such fertilizer, chemical animal replant, tools, etc.). “Luncheros” are known to deliver supplies to “re-supply points” located near the marijuana grow sites. The dates and times that the “Lunchero” visit the sites vary. “Luncheros” are known to supply several grow sites in a given day or days. “Luncheros” and the persons inside the grow site may never see each other as the “Lunchero” will drop off the supplies, pick up a supply list that was left by persons inside the grow site, and leave; the persons in the grow site will later retrieve the items left by the “Lunchero” and leave another supply list.

7. DTO marijuana grow operators often have multiple grow sites. DTO’s know that law enforcement agencies conduct marijuana eradication programs that specifically look for

marijuana grows on public lands. DTO's know that some of their marijuana grow sites are likely to be detected by law enforcement and eradicated. Therefore, DTO's often work several grow sites at the same time, some which may be located hundreds of miles from other sites.

#### 2012 OCONTO COUNTY GROWS

8. In early June of 2012, law enforcement officers were contacted by a Wisconsin DNR game warden who reported that a citizen reported finding a marijuana cultivation site along the South Branch of the Oconto River near County Highway T in Oconto County, Wisconsin. On June 15, 2010, Forest Service agents conducted aerial surveillance and confirmed the presence of at least three marijuana cultivation sites along the South Branch of the Oconto River west of Hwy T and south of Hwy 64 in Oconto County Wisconsin.

9. Between June 27 and June 29, 2012, law enforcement agents installed covert digital cameras covering possible vehicle entry ways into the area of the marijuana grows, entry ways that could be used to resupply the workers who would be living in and actively working the grows. These entry ways, or resupply points, are on National Forest lands in a remote area of Oconto County and are infrequently used by the public.

10. Also on June 29, 2012, agents walked into the area of the grows and confirmed the existence of at least two marijuana gardens and the presence of at least one person in the grows who appeared to be cultivating the marijuana.

11. The covert digital cameras set to cover the access/vehicle entry points to the grows recorded the following:

- a. On July 11 and again on July 17, 2012, a burgundy 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix bearing WI plate 913TEY came and left the resupply point for the grows. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, the Grand Prix came and left (within minutes) from the resupply point at

9:49 a.m. and again at 3:49 p.m. The vehicle arrived at the grow resupply point on July 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:53 p.m. and left at 4:05 p.m. This activity is consistent with dropping off and picking up a worker or workers for the grow site. The Grand Prix is registered to a Maria Blanca Garcia of 510 West Main Street, Brandon, Wisconsin, Apartment 101.

12. On July 17, 2012, agents conducted visual surveillance of the grow sites and observed two individuals dressed in camouflage walking through the grows.

13. I have been involved in the installation, monitoring, maintenance, and retrieval of GPS or Electronic Tracking Devices (ETDs) on vehicles on several occasions. The ETD is covertly placed on the target vehicle, and is equipped with a satellite radio receiver, which, when programmed, periodically records, at specified times, the latitude, longitude, date and time of readings and stores these readings until they are downloaded to a computer interface unit and overlaid on a computerized compact disk mapping program for analysis.

14. A GPS/ETD was surreptitiously installed on the Grand Prix registered to Maria Blanca Garcia on July 23, 2012. Monitoring of the ETD on the target vehicle and visual surveillance has demonstrated that the vehicle is being used to transport individuals to and from the grow sites in Oconto County. Monitoring and surveillance has also shown that Maria Blanca Garcia is operating the vehicle in support of the grow operation and that she, as well as others who I believe are workers on the grow operation, are utilizing apartment 101 at 510 West Main Street, Brandon.

15. On Tuesday July 24, 2012 USFS, WI DNR, and US Customs and Border Protection conducted aerial surveillance of the target area and located approximately 8-10 more sites, just north of the previously identified grows, along the Oconto River.

16. Later that day, the Grand Prix with the GPS on it came to the area of the grows in Oconto County. Based on physical observations and GPS data, agents learned that the driver of the Grand Prix travelled past the known resupply point and continued north on County T. An agent followed her for approximately a half mile at which point the driver abruptly pulled over, let the agent pass, and then turned around back toward the resupply point. The agent was able to see the driver, who appeared to closely resemble the driver's license photograph of Maria Blanca Garcia. Only two occupants (including driver) were in the vehicle at the time.

17. The vehicle headed back south on Highway T. GPS data shows that she pulled into an old timber sale landing north of the known resupply point and stayed for approximately three minutes. The timber sale landing is near to the recently discovered additional grows north of the initially discovered grows. From the timber landing, Maria Garcia drove back through Mountain, WI using the same route she used to come to the grow area. Agents conducting surveillance in Mountain, observed that there were 5 to 6 people in the car at the time. The addition of 3 to 4 persons is consistent with Maria Garcia picking up workers from the forest grow sites near the Oconto River west of Highway T in Oconto County, Wisconsin.

18. Garcia continued to drive south toward Brandon, Wisconsin. Agents requested that a Wisconsin State Trooper conduct a traffic stop on the vehicle. A trooper stopped the vehicle and confirmed through a driver's license that Maria Blanco Garcia of the West Main Street, Brandon, WI address was the driver of the vehicle in which four males, including Miguel Sanchez Garcia, were passengers. GPS data shows that after the stop, the vehicle proceeded to the area of the West Main Street Brandon apartment.

19. On July 31, 2012, GPS data and surveillance by agents showed that that Grand Prix driven by Maria Garcia travelled from the area of the Brandon, WI apartment to the Hwy T

grow sites along the Oconto River in Oconto County. Maria Garcia had a male passenger with her. She stopped at a Wal-Mart along the way before going to two potential points for resupplying those working the Hwy T grows. A receipt from the Wal-Mart shows that she purchased over \$200 worth of food and water. Surveillance by agents at one of the resupply points demonstrates that as the Grand Prix arrived, three males came out from the area of the grows with empty back packs and then walked back to on a trail toward the grows with full back packs.

20. On July 31, 2012, agents walked into the area of the grows along the Oconto River off Hwy T and confirmed the presence of many marijuana plants as well as a site that appeared to be ready for processing the marijuana.

21. Subsequent surveillance combined with monitoring of the data from the GPS on the Grand Prix has shown that the Grand Prix travelled to the area of the Oconto River grows on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> before returning to the Brandon apartment. On August 8, the Grand Prix travelled to a Wal-Mart prior to travelling to the grow sites. Video and receipts from the Wal-Mart show that Maria Garcia purchased tarps and scissors. Based on my experience, I know that these items are used in processing recently harvested marijuana. Agents conducting surveillance on the ground near the Oconto River grows have observed what they believe to be a processing area set up in the forest near to the grow sites. Photographic surveillance from the resupply point confirms that two males came out of the woods to meet the driver of the vehicle and carry plastic bags back into the woods on August 16.

22. Law enforcement surveillance, assisted by GPS data, showed that the Grand Prix travelled from Brandon, WI to the area of the Oconto River grows and back on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Law enforcement agents confirmed that Maria Blanca Garcia was the driver of the Grand Prix on

that date. Photographic surveillance from the resupply point for the grows shows Maria Blanca Garcia and Miguel Sanchez Garcia, one of the males who was in the vehicle when stopped on July 24<sup>th</sup>, meeting with two males and unloading grocery bags from the trunk of the Grand Prix. The two males, who I believe were grow workers, then shuttled the grocery bags into the woods.

23. Law enforcement also obtained information on the rental of Apartment 101 at 510 West Main Street, Brandon, WI from the landlord for the building. The landlord's records show that the apartment was rented by a Blanca Garcia. Cable television records show that Maria Garcia is the current subscriber for service for Apartment 101. Within the past two weeks, agents conducting surveillance at the Brandon, WI apartment rented by Maria Blanca Garcia have observed the Grand Prix along with a second vehicle registered to Maria Blanca Garcia in the parking area for the apartment building. That vehicle is a white 2007 Ford pickup truck with Washington State plate number B45761T. Title records show that the vehicle is registered to Maria B. Garcia at an address in Othello, Washington. A record check for Maria Blanca Garcia shows that prior to the fall of 2011, Maria Blanca Garcia was residing in Washington State. Agents subsequently obtained a warrant to install a GPS on the white truck and affixed a GPS to it.

24. On August 21, 2012, agents conducting surveillance in the evening hours at the landing off Hwy T south of Hwy 64 that had been used as a resupply point for the Oconto River grow sites observed several large black garbage bags at the site. The agents looked in the bags and observed kilograms of processed marijuana divided between numerous vacuum sealed bags. The bags appeared to be left for pickup by a customer or co-actor. The agents conducted surveillance at the resupply point until midnight. The bags were not present at the location the following morning, consistent with the bags being picked up by a customer or grow operation

employee. GPS data from the Grand Prix shows that the Grand Prix did not travel to the area of the Oconto grows sites that evening or during the morning of the following day. The circumstances indicate that an unknown customer or co-actor picked up the processed marijuana for distribution.

25. On August 22, 2012, GPS data from the white pickup truck registered to Maria Garcia showed that the pickup was heading west. Ultimately, an Idaho State trooper stopped the white truck and found that the driver and sole occupant was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was one of the individuals in the back of the Grand Prix when it was stopped by a Wisconsin State Trooper coming from the Oconto River grows on July 24, 2012. The circumstances as observed by the agents prior to that stop show that [REDACTED] was one of three individuals picked up at the grow site the evening of July 24, 2012.

26. In the early morning hours of August 25, 2012, GPS data from the Grand Prix showed that the vehicle was moving from the Brandon apartment. In the early morning hours of August 25, 2012, GPS data showed the Grand Prix used by Maria Blanca Garcia was travelling toward the Oconto River grows. Agents observed the Grand Prix driving in the area of the grows prior to 6:30 a.m. Agents also observed a red pickup truck driving suspiciously near the landing/resupply point, consistent with occupants looking for the landing to pick up a load of marijuana. Agents in the woods near the landing heard the slamming of car doors and soon after observed the red truck and the Grand Prix leave the area by different routes. The Grand Prix made a series of maneuvers consistent with an attempt to identify or lose surveillance officers.

27. Agents followed the red truck and the Grand Prix. The Grand Prix headed south back toward Brandon, Wisconsin. A Wisconsin State Trooper stopped the Grand Prix along


Hwy 41 in Winnebago County and detained the occupants. Maria Blanca Garcia was the driver of the vehicle that also contained four Hispanic males. One of those males was Miguel Sanchez Garcia, who, as noted above, was a passenger in the Grand Prix when stopped on July 24, 2012 coming from the Oconto River grows. Miguel Sanchez was also observed in the vehicle with Maria Blanca Garcia on several other occasions coming to or from the Oconto River grow sites and meeting with an individual believed to be a customer and partner of the grow operation. The activity of Maria Garcia and Miguel Sanchez is consistent with facilitation of the marijuana grow operation, pulling grow workers from the grow site for rest. The other three individuals were Jose Alfredo Sierra-Aguilar, Pedro Enfante-Ramirez and Guillermo Chavez-Carrion, who I believe were workers at the grow and processing site being removed from the site by Maria Garcia and Miguel Sanchez.

28. Agents also stopped the red pickup truck. The driver of the truck, the only occupant, identified himself as Juan Carlos Cervantes-Contreras of Livingston, California. Cervantes-Contreras told the agents that he came to Wisconsin approximately 2 weeks earlier to do farm work for Miguel. Cervantes-Contreras had a cell phone with him in the truck along with a hand-drawn map showing the route to the marijuana grows on the South Branch of the Oconto River.

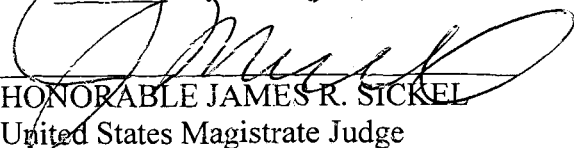
29. Also on August 25, 2012, agents executed a federal search warrant at the Brandon, WI apartment listed as the home address for Maria Blanca Garcia. Among documents and photos for Maria Garcia and Miguel Sanchez, was suitcase with a luggage tag for Juan Cervantes, consistent with Cervantes' report of recent travel to Wisconsin to work for Miguel. Based on the circumstances, I believe that Cervantes was working for Miguel Sanchez in support of a marijuana production operation.

30. In the early afternoon hours of August 25, 2012, agents returned to the resupply point or landing just west of Hwy T and south of Hwy 64 near the grow sites observed along the South Branch of the Oconto River in Oconto County, Wisconsin. The agents observed five garbage bags at the resupply point. The bags were full of processed marijuana packaged the same as the bags observed on August 21, 2012. The circumstances indicate that processed marijuana was at the resupply point to be picked up in the early morning hours of August 25, 2012. Based on the circumstances, I believe that it is likely that Cervantes in the red truck and the occupants of the Grand Prix were in the area to pick up the marijuana when they or the occupants of the Grand Prix observed law enforcement activity in the area and abandoned the pickup of the marijuana.

31. Based on my training, I believe that probable cause exists to establish that between June 1, 2012 and August 25, 2012, Maria Blanca Garcia, Miguel Sanchez-Garcia, Pedro Enfante-Ramirez, Guillermo Chavez-Carrion, Jose Alfredo Sierra-Aguilar, Juan Carlos Cervantes-Contreras, [REDACTED] and others knowingly participated in an extensive enterprise engaged in the manufacture and distribution of marijuana in the Eastern District of Wisconsin. Based on the description of the grow sites and the plants observed by law enforcement agents described above, and my training and experience, I believe that the number of plants under cultivation by the enterprise exceeds 1000.

  
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STEVEN B. CURRAN  
Special Agent  
Drug Enforcement Administration

Subscribed and sworn to before me  
this 27 day of August, 2012.

  
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HONORABLE JAMES R. SICKEL  
United States Magistrate Judge