

Texas Gang Members Found Guilty of Multiple Murder, Narcotics and Firearms Charges

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"Gunning down people in our streets and distributing illegal drugs throughout our communities, these gangs spread violence and addiction wherever they go," said Assistant Attorney General Breuer. "We will not allow their repugnant acts to go unpunished. Today, a jury of Texas citizens sent a message loud and clear to would-be gang members – we can and we will hold you accountable for your crimes."

"For more than a week, this jury listened to testimony concerning the movement of a large amount of drugs and guns throughout the state of Texas by members of the Latin Kings criminal organization," said James T. Jacks, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas. "Not only did this gang pollute the streets of Texas with dangerous drugs, as a result of their heinous actions, two adults, one of whom was pregnant, were brutally murdered with an assault rifle. We are proud that we, along with the hard-working members of the agencies that contributed to this investigation, have brought civilized justice to otherwise uncivilized gang wars. This office is proud to have assisted the Department of Justice's Gang Unit in the successful prosecution of these criminals."

Jose Robledo Nava, aka "Chino," 31, of Lubbock, Texas, and James Johnathan Cole, aka "Blitz," 19, of Lamesa, Texas, were each found guilty by a federal jury in Lubbock on two counts of using a firearm to commit murder during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime, and one count of a conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and 100 kilograms or more of marijuana. The jury also found Nava guilty on one count of possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine, one count of conspiracy to engage in the business of dealing in firearms and one count of possession of stolen firearms.

Nava and Cole were found guilty for their involvement in a drive-by shooting in Big Spring, Texas, on May 4, 2008, in which six people were shot with an AK-47 type rifle. According to the evidence presented at trial, the victims included Michael Cardona and Valeria Garcia, who was 26 weeks pregnant at the time of the shooting. Cardona and Garcia

ultimately died as a result of their wounds. Evidence presented at trial proved that after the shootings, Nava ordered two of his co-conspirators to destroy the murder weapon.

According to evidence presented at trial, Nava was the Texas state enforcer and representative for the ALKQN. The jury found that Nava and Cole were members of a conspiracy that included Luis Nava, aka "Flaco;" Reynaldo Nava, aka "Rat;" Robert Allen Ramirez, aka "Nesyo;" Marie Chavez, aka "Shorty;" Carol Ann Rivas Nava; Cecily Dominique Juarez; Jesus Martinez, aka "Solid;" David Hellums, aka "Cutthroat;" Eduardo Daniel Mares, aka "Pitt;" Gabriel Lee Gonzales; Michael Conde, aka "Psycho;" John Guzman; Guerrero Olivas, aka "Screech;" Eliseo Perez, aka "Wicked;" Joe Canales, aka "Slick;" and others. The jury found that from 2001 until Dec. 13, 2008, Nava and Cole directly or indirectly agreed to distribute, and possessed with intent to distribute, cocaine and marijuana.

The defendants face a maximum statutory sentence of life in prison. A sentencing date has not yet been set by the court.

The case was investigated by the National Gang Targeting, Enforcement and Coordination Center; the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force; the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration; the FBI; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the El Paso Intelligence Center; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; the U.S. Marshals Service; the Texas Department of Public Safety; the Police Departments of Lubbock, Midland, Houston, San Antonio and Big Spring, Texas; the Lubbock County, Texas, Sheriff's Office; and the Howard County, Texas, District Attorney's Office.

Trial Attorneys Cody L. Skipper and Joseph A. Cooley of the Criminal Division's Gang Unit and Assistant U.S. Attorney Denise Williams of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Texas prosecuted the case.

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