



MEMORANDUM

TO: [REDACTED] ICE Director of Investigations
[REDACTED] DEA Chief of Operations

FROM: [REDACTED] SAC, ICE Buffalo, New York
[REDACTED] ASAC, DEA Boston Field Division

SUBJECT: Joint Assessment Team Report

Pursuant to a directive from DEA Chief of Operations [REDACTED] and ICE Director of Investigations [REDACTED], a Joint Assessment Team (JAT) composed of ICE and DEA personnel were sent to El Paso, Texas and Mexico City, Mexico in order to review ICE and DEA activities/events pertaining to investigations targeting [REDACTED] et al. This review also included events pertaining to the evacuation of DEA Special Agents and Support Personnel assigned to the DEA [REDACTED] Resident Office which occurred on January 14, 2004.

This review commenced on February 10, 2004 and ended on February 19, 2004. In connection with this review, the JAT conducted forty-four interviews of DEA, ICE, United States Attorneys Office and Department of State personnel in El Paso, Texas and Mexico. In addition, the JAT conducted investigative and confidential source file reviews and reviewed several recorded conversations in connection with the ICE and DEA [REDACTED] investigations.

This assessment report consists of the JAT timeline of pertinent events, JAT interview summaries and noteworthy reports. All facts detailed within the JAT timeline were agreed upon by ICE and DEA JAT personnel.

Peter [REDACTED]
3/26/04
3/26/04

Summary of Interview with DEA [REDACTED] Division SAC Sandalio Gonzalez

Date: February 11, 2004

Place: DEA [REDACTED] Division

Joint Assessment Team (JAT) Interviewers:

[REDACTED] ICE SAC Buffalo [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DEA ASAC Boston [REDACTED]

On February 11, 2004, JAT members conducted an interview of Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Sandalio Gonzalez. The JAT explained to SAC Gonzalez that the interview was in connection with a joint review being conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The purpose of the joint review was to ascertain the facts related to the events surrounding the evacuation of the DEA Resident Office in [REDACTED] Mexico and events and activities related to ICE and DEA investigations targeting [REDACTED]. It was stressed by JAT personnel that this was solely a fact-finding inquiry to which the final report would be provided to the DEA Chief of Operations and ICE Director of Investigations.

Synopsis of Interview

SAC Gonzalez has been the Special Agent in Charge of the [REDACTED] Division for the past three years. Until recently, SAC Gonzalez stated that DEA has always had an excellent working relationship with ICE [REDACTED]. The relationship was established under the leadership of previous ICE SAC [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez also stated that DEA [REDACTED] has a good working relationship with DEA RAC [REDACTED] of the [REDACTED] office. SAC Gonzalez also stated that RAC [REDACTED] frequently attended supervisors meetings held in the DEA [REDACTED] Office. At these meetings, SAC Gonzalez advised they discussed significant cases, operational and administrative matters.

Pertaining to Operation Skyhigh: SAC Gonzalez was aware that it was an on going multi-agency operation including, DEA, FBI, ICE, USAO and Mexican Authorities targeting elements of the [REDACTED] (VCF) organization in Mexico. According to SAC Gonzalez this multi-agency operation was initiated by DEA [REDACTED]. Over the years there has been some concern from U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies regarding the sharing of information with the Mexican Authorities. SAC Gonzalez stated that he stressed that DEA would not share another agency's information with Mexican Agencies without permission from the agency providing the information. SAC Gonzalez stated that the FBI and ICE did not want certain information passed to the Mexican Authorities. SAC Gonzalez stated that the [REDACTED] investigation was a joint investigation between DEA and ICE and that the FBI had very little involvement with this investigation. SAC Gonzalez recalled the March 2003 controlled delivery of twenty-nine kilograms of cocaine that was received by the ICE [REDACTED] CS from [REDACTED].

addition, SAC Gonzalez commented that DEA [REDACTED] provided an undercover agent for the controlled delivery and DEA [REDACTED] intelligence analysts participated in the debriefing of the CS shortly after the controlled delivery. According to SAC Gonzalez, Group Supervisor [REDACTED] group had primary oversight of the DEA [REDACTED] investigation targeting VCF.

Pertaining to the arrest of ICE [REDACTED] CS on June 28, 2003: SAC Gonzalez indicated that he was notified about the arrest of the CS for transporting narcotics sometime after the CS was deactivated by the DEA [REDACTED] Resident Office in late June or early July 2003. SAC Gonzalez wasn't involved with the deactivation of the CS by DEA. According to SAC Gonzalez, the CS was never established by DEA [REDACTED]

Pertaining to the August 5, 2003, murder that occurred in Juarez, Mexico involving the CS: SAC Gonzalez wasn't aware of this situation until January 14, 2004. SAC Gonzalez stated that he was informed telephonically of this information by ICE [REDACTED] Associate SAC [REDACTED]

Pertaining to the OCDETF meeting of August 25, 2003: SAC Gonzalez attended this meeting with ASAC [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez stated that this was a contentious meeting because the FBI was going off on their own and not advising the other agencies of enforcement actions in Spain. In particular, ICE Associate SAC [REDACTED] had a heated discussion with the FBI Supervisor regarding their plan to arrest a mutual VCF related target in Spain without notifying the other agencies involved with the investigation. When asked if he heard any conversation pertaining to the future indictment of [REDACTED] or the proposed lure to get him into the country, SAC Gonzalez couldn't recall those matters being discussed, however, did note that there were people having other conversations in the room. SAC Gonzalez' most vivid memory of the meeting was the discussion between ICE and FBI.

SAC Gonzalez stated that he was not advised of additional murders pertaining to the [REDACTED] investigation (September 11, November 23, November 30, December 11, 2003 and January 8, January 14, 2004) until mid January 2004.

Pertaining to the indictment and lure of [REDACTED] SAC Gonzalez stated he wasn't aware of the indictment and that he wouldn't be advised unless it was a major case. SAC Gonzalez stated that he wasn't aware of the lure proposal until after January 14, 2004. SAC Gonzalez advised a lure proposal is an enforcement activity that would have been brought to his attention by ASAC [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez noted that he was not advised of the ICE [REDACTED] lure operation by anyone from the ICE [REDACTED] management team.

Pertaining to the evacuation of the DEA [REDACTED] Resident office on January 14, 2004: SAC Gonzalez stated that he was out of town until January 20, 2004. He was advised telephonically of the situation and updated on a regular basis by Acting SAC [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez didn't get involved with the threat or investigation until he returned to [REDACTED] on January 20, 2004.

Pertaining to the meeting on January 25, 2004: SAC Gonzalez stated that he attend this meeting with ASAC [REDACTED], ARD [REDACTED], RAC [REDACTED] and ICE was represented by SAC Gaudioso, A/SAC [REDACTED], ASAC Gonzalez, GS [REDACTED] and SA [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez stated the majority of the discussion pertained to arresting [REDACTED]. According to SAC Gonzalez, DEA advised that 80 AFI Agents were on their way to [REDACTED] to assist in the investigation. According to SAC Gonzalez, DEA understood the relationship between the CS and [REDACTED] was good enough that the CS could have made calls to [REDACTED] and arranged to meet [REDACTED] at a public place in order to arrest [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez stated that ICE management expressed concern for the CS' safety and stated that the plan was not feasible. SAC Gonzalez noted that he had a discussion with RAC [REDACTED] and ARD [REDACTED] in which they advised they had reviewed previous phone conversations between the CS and [REDACTED] (tapes) and believed there was a working relationship between the CS and [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez stated that [REDACTED] had made calls to the CS and it was his belief that the CS could return [REDACTED] call. SAC Gonzalez stated that ICE management disagreed with DEA and advised they didn't believe the CS and [REDACTED] were in a relationship that the CS could call [REDACTED]. SAC Gonzalez again stated that ICE management advised that they feared for the safety of CS and his family.

During the meeting, photos of the house, gravesites, crime scene, and victims were shared. SAC Gonzalez stated that when DEA departed the meeting there was a disagreement between ICE and DEA pertaining to the proposed plan to arrest [REDACTED] and the direction of this particular investigation. SAC Gonzalez noted that everyone departed the meeting on a good note and the discussions were not heated.

In late January 2004, SAC Gonzalez stated that he had some concerns regarding the CS and the investigation. SAC Gonzalez stated that he contacted Chief AUSA [REDACTED] and asked if she knew of the first murder on August 5, 2003 and expressed his concerns of the additional deaths in Mexico. During this conversation, SAC Gonzalez felt that AUSA [REDACTED] "wasn't in the loop on the entire investigation." SAC Gonzalez also stated that AUSA [REDACTED] advised that she believed that the ICE [REDACTED] CS did not travel back to Mexico after the August 5, 2003, murder. SAC Gonzalez advised AUSA [REDACTED] that she should review the situation and then the two of them should discuss the facts. According to SAC Gonzalez this follow up conversation did not occur as of the date of the interview.

SAC Gonzalez advised that he had concerns with the [REDACTED] USAO "lack of trust" and that it had a negative effect on this investigation. Up until this investigation he didn't think there was an issue with "trust". According to SAC Gonzalez he was advised that AUSA [REDACTED] did not trust DEA ARD [REDACTED].

SAC Gonzalez also advised that he had discussed with ICE SAC [REDACTED] the availability of the C/S to be debriefed by DEA. SAC [REDACTED] denied this request.