



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wilton Residents Found Guilty of Drug Conspiracy Charges

BISMARCK - United States Attorney Drew H. Wrigley announced today that

Francis K. Zacher, a/k/a Frank Zacher, 46, and Madina Helm, 44, both of Wilton, North Dakota, were found guilty by a Federal jury of several counts involving a drug conspiracy. **Zacher and Helm** were each convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute controlled substance and possession of firearms and ammunition by an unlawful user of a controlled substance. **Zacher** was also convicted on a count of possession of an unregistered firearm. The case was presided over by United States District Court Senior Judge Patrick A. Conmy. A co-defendant, **Jesse Garcia, 61, Hereford, Texas,** pleaded guilty on September 19, 2005, to a count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute controlled substance.

In November 2004 officials from Federal Express in Bismarck reported to the Bismarck Police Department that suspicious packages were being sent between **Zacher** and **Garcia**. On November 16, 2004, **Helm** delivered a package to Federal Express in Bismarck. Bismarck police obtained a search warrant for that package and discovered \$5,200 in cash in the package. On November 29, 2004, another package arrived at the Federal Express facility addressed to **Zacher** from **Garcia**. A search warrant was obtained and officers found 132 grams of a substance containing methamphetamine in the package. On November 30, 2004, **Helm** transported another package to Federal Express; again, a search warrant was obtained and \$6,200 in cash was found.

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On December 1, 2004, the Texas Department of Public Safety obtained a search warrant for **Garcia's** residence in Hereford, Texas. The search revealed approximately 407 grams of a mixture containing methamphetamine within the residence.

On December 1, 2004, a search warrant was obtained for the **Zacher** residence in rural Wilton, and **Helm** consented to a search of her residence in Wilton. Law enforcement officers discovered several firearms and ammunition at the **Zacher** residence. **Zacher** was also found to possess a weapon made from a shotgun which was not registered to him with the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record. A firearm and ammunition were found in a search of **Helm's** vehicle.

The charge of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute controlled substance carries a statutory maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of \$4,000,000. The charge of possession of firearms and ammunition by an unlawful user of a controlled substance carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of possession of unregistered firearm carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years of imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Bismarck Police Department, Metro Area Narcotics Task Force, North Dakota Parole and Probation, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Texas Department of Public Safety.

Sentencing has not been scheduled.

Special Assistant United States Attorney Paul Emerson prosecuted the case.

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