

## Mexican Cartel Allegedly Sold 'Poison' Drugs Out of Taco Trucks

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May 20, 2022

Taco trucks in South Carolina were serving quite a bit more than your typical Mexican fare, according to recently unsealed documents.

Indictments issued by the South Carolina Grand Jury and unsealed Thursday by the South Carolina Attorney General's Office revealed 124 charges against 34 defendants reportedly part of the "Los Banditos" Mexican cartel.

Authorities said that much of the drug trafficking was run and facilitated by the owners of the Los Primos restaurant located in Greenville, South Carolina. Although drugs were allegedly trafficked statewide, most of them were trafficked upstate.

Los Primos was described as a "regional hub" where many drugs were allegedly sold straight out of the restaurant, including out of taco trucks owned by the restaurant's owners.

Authorities say that to date the investigation has led to the seizure of about:

- 24 pounds of methamphetamine
- 1.3 pounds of cocaine
- Approximately \$63,000 in cash
- Over 20 firearms.

Historically, the cartel operation has allegedly accounted for trafficking over 1 ton of methamphetamine, 220 pounds of cocaine, and 4.4 pounds of heroin throughout South Carolina.

Drugs and firearms were also allegedly collected from several apartments and stash houses in Atlanta, Georgia. There, the investigation led to the capture of:

- Approximately 441 pounds of methamphetamine
- 7.7 pounds of cocaine
- 7 pounds of heroin

- 5 ounces of cocaine mixed with fentanyl
- 183 pounds of marijuana
- 900 Xanax pills
- Multiple firearms

A substantial portion of those seized drugs were allegedly intended for South Carolina, authorities said.

"This was a very large scale organized drug operation that allegedly was trafficking kilograms of drugs every week into Greenville County," said South Carolina's 13th Circuit Solicitor Walt Wilkins in a statement. "The hard work and dedication of the Greenville Drug Enforcement Unit, SLED, and the South Carolina State Grand Jury has significantly decreased the availability of drugs in the Greenville Community and arrested some of its worst drug dealers.

"While this organization has ties from Mexico to numerous cities in the United States, its drug trafficking efforts and locations in Greenville County were continuing to pump poison directly into our communities. This is a great win for the citizens of Greenville County and these numerous arrests will have an immediate and direct impact upon the citizens of Greenville County and neighboring counties."

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson called the investigation "yet another example of aggressive use of the State Grand Jury and investigative techniques to combat gangs and drug trafficking."

Mexican cartel members are aggressively recruiting in American prisons, according to Border Report, including gang members in El Paso, Texas, to distribute drugs and bring guns over the border—the latter of which is difficult due to Mexico's strict firearms laws and a lack of gun-manufacturing facilities.

One FBI agent in EL Paso said cartels' actions are "always ongoing and continuous." El Paso reportedly has more than 100 gangs and more than 1,000 gang members.

The majority of Americans are in favor of immigration than against it. According to results from the 2021 Cato Institute Immigration and Identity National Survey, about 72 percent of respondents believe that immigrants come to the United States for jobs and life improvement.

While 53 percent of respondents believe the ability to immigrate is a "human right," the same percentage said they oppose immigrant households from receiving welfare.

A YouGov poll also showed that the majority of Americans do not want legal status from preventing immigrants from receiving K-12 education.

Virtual bond hearings for some of the 34 defendants took place Monday in front of Judge Alison Renee Lee in her virtual courtroom. Charges vary by each defendant, with some offenses punishable by up to 25 or 30 years in prison.

A spokesperson for the South Carolina Attorney General's Office told *Newsweek* that the office has no further comment due to the ongoing investigation.