



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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Fentanyl Trafficker Pleads Guilty, Faces 15 Years in Prison Thanks to Prop 36

VENTURA, Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Jose Trinidad Bueno Garcia (DOB 02/11/75), of Van Nuys, pled guilty on December 17, 2025, to leading a large-scale drug trafficking operation responsible for distributing fentanyl and methamphetamine throughout Ventura County.

Garcia pled guilty to conspiracy to possess fentanyl for sale. He also admitted that the offense involved more than four kilograms of fentanyl, triggering a significant weight enhancement. In addition, Garcia admitted that the crime involved a large quantity of contraband and was carried out with planning, sophistication, and professionalism.

Between May 2025 and October 2025, detectives with the Ventura County Combined Agency Team (VCAT) conducted an extensive investigation into a Los Angeles County drug trafficking organization's operation. The investigation established that the organization was sourcing fentanyl and methamphetamine from Mexico and selling those drugs to Ventura County residents.



On October 1, 2025, VCAT detectives executed a search warrant at Garcia's residence and seized approximately 3,574 gross grams of fentanyl, 261 grams of methamphetamine, \$32,406 in U.S. currency, and additional evidence of drug sales. Search warrants were also executed at four other properties. In total, detectives seized 6,517 grams fentanyl, representing 325,850 fatal doses.

Deputy District Attorney Devin Mirchi, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Major Crimes Narcotics Unit, is prosecuting the case.

Garcia is scheduled to be sentenced on January 21, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He is expected to be sentenced to 15 years in state prison. Four additional co-defendants are scheduled for an early disposition conference on January 29, 2026.

Thirteen years of Garcia's anticipated sentence are attributable to enhancements authorized under Proposition 36, the *Homelessness, Drug Addiction, and Theft Reduction Act*. Prior to the passage of Proposition 36, offenders responsible for trafficking this volume of drugs would not have faced the increased penalties associated with weight enhancements.

"We are committed to lowering the number of fentanyl overdose deaths in Ventura County and holding offenders accountable," said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. "Anyone who peddles this poison in Ventura County will be prosecuted vigorously."

Proposition 36 took effect on December 18, 2024. Since that time, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office has filed 481 drug-related possession cases, including 336 felony filings and 145 misdemeanor filings. Of the felony cases filed, 113 defendants were referred to Drug Treatment Court, offering eligible non-violent offenders an opportunity to pursue treatment in lieu of incarceration. During the same period, prosecutors filed 30 additional weight enhancement allegations against defendants trafficking large amounts of fentanyl, including in the case against Garcia.

California voters in all 58 counties overwhelmingly approved Proposition 36 in November 2024. In Ventura County, the measure passed with nearly 70 percent of the vote.

Case: 2025025166

Defendant Information:

Jose Trinidad Bueno Garcia (DOB 02/11/75)
Van Nuys

Charges pled guilty to:

- PC 182(a)(1) – Conspiracy to commit a crime

Special allegations admitted:

- HS 11370.4(c)(1)(E) – Fentanyl punishment by quantity (Prop 36)
- HS 11370.4(c)(2) – Substantial involvement (Prop 36)
- CRC 4.421(a)(10) – The crime involved a large quantity of contraband
- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning, sophistication, or professionalism

