



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Owner of Money Service Business Unlawfully Residing in the United States Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Launder Drug Proceeds

PORTLAND, Ore.— The owner and operator of La Popular, a money service business with locations in Oregon and Washington, pleaded guilty today to conspiring to launder drug trafficking proceeds.

Brenda Lili Barrera Orantes, 40, a Guatemalan national unlawfully residing in the United States, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to launder monetary instruments.

According to court documents, Barrera Orantes operated La Popular stores in Hillsboro, Beaverton, Woodburn, Odell and Canby, Oregon, as well as in Vancouver, Washington. From August 1, 2024, through November 1, 2024, La Popular stores sent over \$4.2 million dollars in wire transfers to places in Mexico. During this same time period, Barrera Orantes and other co-conspirators accepted \$49,500 in cash represented as drug proceeds and laundered the funds through La Popular stores. Barrera Orantes charged a ten percent commission to help launder the money. Barrera Orantes admitted that when she wired these funds she used false sender information, structured wire transfers into smaller amounts, and used different La Popular stores to help conceal the drug proceeds.

On April 16, 2025, investigators executed federal search warrants at Barrera Orantes' Beaverton residence and three La Popular stores in Beaverton, Hillsboro, and Vancouver and arrested Barrera Orantes. During the warrants, agents seized \$316,542 in cash, a 2021 Cadillac Escalade, jewelry, and high-end clothing.

On May 13, 2025, a federal grand jury in Portland returned a 23-count indictment charging Barrera Orantes with money laundering and conspiracy, failure to file a currency transaction report, and failure to file a suspicious activity report.

Barrera Orantes pleaded guilty today to one count of conspiracy to launder monetary instruments. She also agreed to forfeit her Beaverton residence and all the seized property involved in her money laundering offense.

Barrera Orantes faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, a \$500,000 fine, and three years of supervised release. She will be sentenced on January 21, 2026, before a U.S. District Court Judge.

This case is being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Westside

Interagency Narcotics Team. It is being prosecuted by Christopher L. Cardani and Julia Jarrett, Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the District of Oregon.

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