



Limas case suspect free on \$50,000 bond

By [EMMA PEREZ-TREVINO, The Brownsville Herald](#)

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A former bondsman tied to the bribery and extortion schemes of former 404th state District Judge Abel C. Limas was released from federal custody Friday on a \$50,000 unsecured bond.

Francisco "Pancho" Cisneros, 47, of Brownsville, indicted by a grand jury on charges of conspiracy to extort and aiding and abetting extortion, pleaded not guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Felix Recio.

The U.S. Attorney's Office did not object to the unsecured bond, which had been recommended by the pretrial service officer. Electronic monitoring also was not recommended.

The judge, however, noted that he was a bit bothered that an unsecured bond was being recommended because, he said, unsecured bonds are usually reserved for defendants who cannot afford bond payment or to hire an attorney, as Cisneros has been able to do.

As Cisneros started to tell the judge that he has some money in the bank, his attorney, Leonardo Rin-cones Jr., interrupted him and told the judge that Cisneros comes from a family of 12 siblings who are very supportive of him and who are helping him.

Recio warned Cisneros not to contact any of the co-defendants or witnesses in the case and not to travel outside of Cameron County. The pretrial service officer's report on Cisneros said that he had several weapons in his house.

"Get those weapons out of your house," Recio told Cisneros, noting that he would not be released until the weapons had been removed.

Cisneros is charged with paying \$700 to Limas in 2008 via Limas' associate Jose Manuel Longoria – who also has been indicted — in return for changing a \$25,000 cash/surety bond to a personal recognizance bond for a client of Cisneros, defendant Rodolfo Gracia.

Cisneros is identified as a bondsman in the indictment that the grand jury returned against him. At present, he is not a licensed bondsman, according to the Cameron County department that administers bail bonds in the county.

The administration of the department changed in 2008, and there were no records immediately available that showed Cisneros had ever been licensed by the department.

The Cameron County court file on Gracia's case indicates that Limas did more than just change the \$25,000 bond to a personal recognizance bond for Gracia on Jan. 31, 2008.

Gracia had been convicted on a drug charge July 31, 2003, and at the time Limas gave him five years' probation.

The court record shows that within months, the Cameron County District Attorney's Office moved to revoke Gracia's probation. Limas that same month ordered that a warrant be issued for Gracia's arrest and he set the \$25,000 surety bond.

Not much appears to have happened for more than four years until Jan. 31, 2008, when Limas changed Gracia's bond to a personal recognizance bond.

The state's motion to revoke was then set for Feb. 14, 2008, but it was reset for Aug. 1, 2008.

A hearing was held Aug. 1, 2008, but by then, the five years' probation had been allowed to run its course. Probation expired July 31, 2008.

"The Court, after hearing from the probation officer, the District Attorney and the Defendant, finds out case expired already and Dismiss Motion to Revoke," Limas' order of dismissal filed Aug. 11 states.

"It is, therefore, ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED, that the defendant, Rodolfo Gracia, be and is he is hereby discharged from all further liability and the State's Motion to Revoke filed on October 8, 2003, is hereby dismissed and Defendant released from probation based on probation being expired," Limas said.

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