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12th Defendant Pleads Guilty In Racketeering Case

A member of a Dodge City street gang charged in a federal racketeering case has pleaded guilty, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said today.

Juan Torres, 22, Dodge City, Kan., pleaded guilty to one count of aiding and abetting attempted murder, which was a violent crime in aid of racketeering. He admitted he was involved in an Oct. 4, 2008, incident in which two people were shot.

In his plea, Torres admitted he was a Diablos Viejos (DV) gang member associated with the Norteno street gang when he accompanied two co-defendants in an attack at the home of a member of the rival Sureno gang. On Oct. 4, 2008, Torres and two co-defendants gathered in a barn behind a house at 10770 Kettle Way near Dodge City, which was a hangout for the gang. Later that day, Torres and the two co-defendants drove to the home of Abel Hernandez, a known Sureno gang member, and Rumalda Hipolito. Outside the home, Hernandez's brother and others were drinking beer. One of the Nortenos began harassing them and shouting Norteno slogans. After someone threw a beer bottle at the Nortenos' car, Torres and the two co-defendants drove away. The three Nortenos obtained a firearm, an SKS or AK-47 style weapon and returned to Hernandez's house, parking in an alley half a block away. After approaching the house on foot, co-defendant **Gonzalo Ramirez** discharged multiple rounds from the firearm. The gunshots hit the house, striking Abel Hernandez and Rumalda Hipolito. Hipolito suffered a gunshot wound to the arm. Hernandez suffered a gunshot wound to the leg. Investigators found 10 bullet holes in the house and recovered 20 shell casings at the scene. After the shooting, Torres and the two co-defendants returned to the house on Kettle Way, where they hid the car in the barn.

Sentencing is set for Sept. 16. He faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison and a fine up to $250,000.

US Attorney Office