



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

[Home](#) » [Office of Public Affairs](#) » [News](#)

SHARE 

JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, November 20, 2018

**Albuquerque Man Pleads Guilty to Additional Felony Charges in Interstate Dog Fighting Conspiracy**

A resident of Albuquerque has been convicted on federal dog fighting charges, stemming from a case brought by federal authorities in the U.S. District Court in the District of New Mexico. Robert Arellano, 65, pleaded guilty on November 15, 2018, in federal court in Trenton, New Jersey, to three felony counts of possessing a dog intended for use in an animal fighting venture at his home in Albuquerque. Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey Bossert Clark of the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division, United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico John C. Anderson, and United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey Craig Carpenito made the announcement.

“Dog fighting is a cruel and brutal practice that has no place in a civilized society,” said Assistant Attorney General Clark. “The Department of Justice is aggressively pursuing those who engage in this inhumane spectacle, which is often linked with many forms of violent and organized criminal activity. This conviction demonstrates our firm commitment to fight back against those who would abuse these animals, in clear violation of federal law.”

“Dogfighting for entertainment and profit is the organized and heinous business of breeding and conditioning dogs to fight each other until one dog kills the other,” said New Mexico U.S. Attorney John C. Anderson. “These convictions bring to an end Mr. Arellano’s 30 years in this unconscionable business, and hopefully will deter others who seek to profit from forcing animals fight to the death. In New Mexico, we will continue to seek out and punish those who exploit and abuse animals.”

“Dog fighting is vicious and cruel. And beyond the needless suffering it inflicts on animals, it exacts a toll on local animal shelters, humane organizations, and the taxpayers of New Jersey,” U.S. Attorney Carpenito said. “The message from this conviction is simple: if you fight dogs in New Jersey, you will face prosecution and imprisonment.”

This conviction is separate from and in addition to a verdict rendered against Arellano and three others by a federal jury in Trenton, New Jersey in October. In that case, the jury convicted the four defendants on all 23 counts of violating and conspiring to violate the animal fighting prohibitions of the federal Animal Welfare Act, following a near month-long trial before Judge Sheridan.

From 2012 through June 1, 2016, Arellano possessed dogs at his home in Albuquerque for dog

RELATED LINKS

[Speeches and Press Releases](#)

[Videos](#)

[Photos](#)

[Blogs](#)

fighting purposes, and trafficked in dogs with other dog fighters in Indiana and New Jersey so that those dogs could be used in fights. He also maintained a collection of dog fighting videos, records, how-to materials, and photographs. Arellano meticulously recorded the dogs’ fighting pedigrees and histories, previous fights and kills, serious injuries they inflicted on other dogs or sustained themselves, and future planned fights for the dogs. He also kept veterinary drugs and equipment to shield the dogs from professional veterinary scrutiny and care, including a used I.V. line containing canine DNA, injectable horse steroids, and injectable veterinary medicines manufactured in Mexico.

This case is part of Operation Grand Champion, an ongoing multi-state dog fighting investigation. The phrase “Grand Champion” is used by dog fighters to refer to a dog with more than five dog fighting “victories.” To date, 123 dogs have been rescued as part of Operation Grand Champion, and either surrendered or forfeited to the government, and eleven defendants have been convicted or indicted in four different states. The case was prosecuted in New Mexico by Trial Attorney Ethan Eddy of the Justice Department’s Environmental Crimes Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Letitia Simms and Paul Mysliwiec. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Office of Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Each count of conviction carries a maximum of five years in prison and a criminal fine of up to \$250,000. Five other defendants in the case previously pleaded guilty to dog fighting and firearms charges and were sentenced to a total of 153 months in prison.

**Topic(s):**

Violent Crime

**Press Release Number:**

18-1529

**Component(s):**

- Environment and Natural Resources Division
- USAO - New Jersey
- USAO - New Mexico

*Updated November 20, 2018*

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

en ESPAÑOL  
Contact DOJ

- Archive
- Accessibility
- Information Quality
- Privacy Policy
- Legal Policies & Disclaimers
- Social Media

- Budget & Performance
- Office of the Inspector General
- No FEAR Act
- For Employees
- FOIA
- USA.gov

**Stay Connected with Justice:**



Email Updates