
— THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE —

DISTRICT *of* KANSAS

**Olathe Restaurant Worker Who Plotted to Poison Diners'
Salsa
Sentenced To 10 Years In Federal Prison**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KANSAS CITY, KAN. — A Shawnee, Kan., man has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to hatching a scheme to put poison in salsa served to patrons at Mi Ranchito restaurant in Lenexa, Kan., U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said today. More than 40 diners at the restaurant reported suffering symptoms of the poison. Bazan also was ordered to pay more than \$487,000 in restitution.

Arnoldo Bazan, 32, Shawnee, Kan., pleaded guilty to a charge of conspiracy to tamper with a consumer product. In his plea, Bazan admitted he was angry after losing his job in June 2009 at the Mi Ranchito restaurant in Olathe, Kan. He believed the owner of the restaurant was responsible for him losing his job and his car being stolen.

Bazan and his wife, **Yini De La Torre**, who was a waitress at a Mi Ranchito restaurant in Lenexa, Kan., devised a scheme to get revenge by putting a pesticide into the salsa at the Lenexa Mi Ranchito. On two occasions, De La Torre put a Methomyl-based pesticide into the salsa. On Aug. 11, 2009, twelve patrons of Mi Ranchito suffered instant nausea, abdominal cramps, weakness, sweating and chest discomfort after consuming salsa. On Aug 30, 2009, 36 patrons of Mi Ranchito suffered similar or more severe symptoms after consuming salsa. Some were transported to the hospital. The poisoned patrons ranged from young children to senior citizens, some with medical conditions that were aggravated by the poisoning.

De La Torre was sentenced to 87 months and ordered to pay more than \$478,000 in restitution after pleading guilty to the same charge.

“The defendant demonstrated blatant disregard for the health and welfare of the public,” said Patrick J. Holland, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Office of Criminal Investigations. “We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate and prosecute individuals who tamper with food, drugs and other FDA regulated products.”

Grissom commended the following agencies and individuals for their work on the case: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration - Office of Criminal Investigation, the Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division, the Lenexa Police Department, the Johnson County District Attorney’s Office, the Kansas Department of Agriculture, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Johnson County Health Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Rask.