

**DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION
HISTORICAL INTERVIEWS
JAVIER PENA - TAPE NO. 163**

MS = Sean Fearn, DEA Museum Director

JP = Javier Pena, ASAC, San Antonio, Texas

00:39:09;28 MS: The DEA Museum here at DEA Headquarters, on behalf of all of us on the Museum staff, I'd like to welcome you and for those that were here last month, welcome you back to our continuing monthly presentation lecture series in honor of DEA's 30th anniversary. Last month we visited Mexico, this month we move south to Columbia and we are honored to have Javier Pena with us this morning.

00:39:32;19 Before I continue I do want to notice that we have two very special guests with us, former DEA Deputy Administrator Julio Mercado is in the audience this morning, welcome back. Good to see you, hope things are good in Atlanta. We're also joined this morning by Director Ben Raina (ph.), Director of the US Marshal Service, good morning sir.

00:40:00;07 Both very good friends of Javier who will elaborate more as he gets into his presentation. Again Mr. Pena began his career in law enforcement at the Webb County

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Sheriff's Office back in 1977. In 1984 he was hired by DEA, initially assigned to the Austin resident office for four years.

00:40:18;25 In 1988 Mr. Pena transferred to the Bogotá, Columbia country office where he was case agent for the Medline cartel drug investigation. Mr. Pena worked in Bogotá until 1994 where he transferred as a group supervisor to the San Juan, Puerto Rico DEA office. From 1997 to 1999, Mr. Pena was assigned to the special operations division of DEA Headquarters here in Washington after which he was promoted to Assistant Country Attached back in the Bogotá country office.

00:40:53;06 In 2001 Mr. Pena was selected as the assistant special agent in charge of the San Antonio District Office which covers San Antonio, Austin and Waco. Mr. Pena graduated from Texas A&M University in 1979 with a bachelors in sociology and psychology. It is a pleasure to welcome Mr. Pena this morning to talk with us about Columbia and the investigation against the Medline cartel.

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00:41:24;02 JP: Thank you Sean, I want to thank also Susan Vehille (ph.) in Sean's... I don't know why I'm here but I did sleep at the Holiday Inn Express last night so... but anyway I want to thank everybody who's here and I want to also acknowledge my old former ASAC, Hunamer Mercado, we worked in Puerto Rico together. He was the buffer between Felix Hemanes and myself.

00:41:46;02 We had a lot of rough times right Julio with Felix, but we were able to survive, so I know Felix very tough, but good, good manager and also want to welcome the US Marshal Benre. Now we have a mutual friend in Brownsville, that's how I got to meet him and some of you all know him Georgie, I always call him Georgie, it's George Salmay, but he's a great investigator.

00:42:14;28 And he's really I guess grew up with the marshal, so thank you. And also here... see chief of operations, Jimmy Capra, so... appreciate it. We're going to keep this informal as possible and before I begin I just want to show like it's about a four, five minute film clip on some of the scenes... that's been in the news, that's

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been on TV documentaries, but sort of...

00:42:40;09 I'll talk about them in more detail but you'll see... one of the scenes really to me was the one that's going to be where they shoot Louis Carlos Galans, he was a presidential candidate in Columbia. He's what I always call the John F. Kennedy of Columbia. He was going to win, was going to be the next president of Columbia.

00:43:00;22 But because of his stands on extradition and you know, one message, one theme I always try to relay is that traffickers around the world, be terrorists, traffickers, bad guys, they're always afraid of one thing, which is extradition. Louis Carlos Galans was for extradition and Pablo Escobars was deathly afraid of extradition.

00:43:25;18 Then you know and extradition is what really started the war against Columbia. So if you could play this film clip about four or five minutes and then we'll start with the presentation. Thank you.

00:43:48;23 FILM CLIP

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00:47:31;02 Thank you Reggie, like I said that last scene in which Escobar has Galans killed really was the straw that broke Columbia's back. The Medline cartel was made up of Pablo Escobar as the... what I like to call the CEO, he had the Goucho Brothers, Horto Louis, Fabio and Desyanno, Miami, convicted Fabio here not too long ago and I'm not sure if he's been sentenced yet.

00:48:00;07 And Juan David was the other brother. The other element of the Medline cartel was Jose Gonzalo, Rodriguez Goucha, so you all remember him as El Mexicano. And what I like to say is that it was a CEO, it was a cartel in that everybody borrowed each other's airplanes, each other's air strips, each other's money launderers. The cigaros (ph.) is a common word in Columbia for assassins.

00:48:30;03 And you know it was the airplanes, it was the labs, so everybody would get together and it wasn't like I had everything, everybody used to have... Goucha was famous for running the biggest labs in the Magdalena area of Columbia. Pablo Escobar was like I said the CEO in that

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he was the one that who gave the orders, gave the instructions, set the prices for the cocaine.

00:48:58;01 And if people didn't want to abide this, they would kill you. Pablo was probably the world's... one of the world's most ruthless, barbaric traffickers we have ever seen. I want to point out... Colonel Oulio Relarr, one really one of the truly heroes of the Columbia national police.

00:49:15;06 There he is with a smile on his face after they killed Escobar. And it just so happened I just saw an article where Colonel Agulat is running for a governor in one of the countries in Columbia. This is the make-up of the, you know, the old Medline cartel which was Pablo on top. Here we have Roberto his brother.

00:49:42;08 And you know what, a lot of people do not or you know we never really emphasized in the middle, Gustavo Gavillia, he was really the brains of the cartel. Him and Pablo grew up together, they were childhood friends, started robbing together, stealing cars, do a couple of keys at a

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time.

00:49:59;17 But it was Gustavo Gavillia, I remember when we were... we had the intercepts, the telephone intercepts which at that time were being run out of Medline, I mean we used to hear Gustavo calling Mexico like it was nothing at all and you know getting the coordinates for the airplanes to land, you know coordinating with the Mexicans.

00:50:22;02 In fact one of their staging areas used to be in the Monterria area of Columbia and we used to have informants who would tell us, there'd be seven or eight kings, one thousands lined up ready to go into Mexico, seven or eight planes, each carrying about 1000 keys of cocaine. And the same was... was true in the money that was coming back. It was just... enormous amounts of money in cash that would be flown into, back into Columbia.

00:50:50;11 And Gustavo was killed by the police in a shoot out, in fact at his residence in 1989. And this was really... this is one of the... I usually try to say that it was one of Escobar's arms that fell during this time cause

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Gustavo was really the one who knew the inner dealings of the cartel, the day-to-day activities, the money laundering activities into the US.

00:51:17;09 All sorts of accounts were being displayed at this time. The other guy is Jorge Louis and you know... they're brothers just like (unint.) in Miami. On the bottom tier here, this were his cigarios, his assassins. And you know during Medline, it was... well it wasn't funny, but it was... if you saw two guys on a motorcycle, that was against the law.

00:51:41;13 Can you imagine that, because the back guy, if you saw two guys coming you better run or hide because the bad guy was going to shoot you, I mean it got so bad that this was one of their favorite methods of killing people, that they outlawed having two guys on a motorcycle. Benina, the guy, the first guy here, was also killed with the police in a shoot out.

00:51:59;22 He was one of Escobar's most ruthless traffickers. The other three guys were Popeye, Mood and Otto and those

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guys... when Escobar surrendered and I'll get a little bit into how he surrendered, why he surrendered, he took them with the prison so they could him, they were his trusted cigaros.

00:52:18;17 I think two of the guys are still in jail, one has been killed, same thing with the other guy, Preskul... Preskul Lopettos ran their own assassination groups. The other two guys on the far... left are really kind of an interesting story. The first guy is a guy named... Branscene Minoz Moscara Laquikas, I mean I remember him, and this was just again working off of wire taps in Medline with the Columbian national police.

00:52:46;04 As I say I remember one night and there was... you know the guy, the police officer who was monitoring that phone was the guy also who... who swept the room, took care of the beds. And I remember him telling me, he says Javier, I think Laquikas and Laquikas at this time was Escobar's favorite cigarito.

00:53:04;26 I mean they trusted him and his brother, a guy named

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Tyson at the end, to do all their killings. And I say when they trusted them, is that they also had their own groups so they would contract to go kill people. And I remember he mentions that La Quika was in Los Angeles, you know like none of the police really believed him.

00:53:26;02 And we took an interest, in fact... my partner Gary Sheridan at this time and I... were in Mediene and we took an interest in it and there was a phone call that was made to a hotel in Los Angeles. And I remember... we sent a picture of La Quika there and DEA went out to the hotel, they had just left but when they presented the photo to the clerk, they said, yep that's him.

00:53:49;22 So wow, we had a problem, we La Quika, one of Escobar's favorite assassins in the United States. So obviously we took a lot of interest in that wire tap, we were able to follow him to New Jersey, we missed him again cause of time problems. And one call came in, it was during the day, La Quika called his mom and his mom was not in so he said, you know what I'll be... I'm going to be at this number.

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00:54:18;16 He gave a New York pay phone at like 8:00 tonight. So obviously you know what we did, we had like what... 500 agents in New York surrounding that pay phone and at 8:00 he shows up, gets the call and boom, you know, he is arrested. And I also like to mention that... you know what we got him on, we got him... we sentenced him to five years.

00:54:40;26 We couldn't prove any terrorist attacks or what he was doing in the United States, so we got him on line to a federal agent can you believe that, and he was sentenced the maximum of five years. So that gave us time during those five years and I also credit Sam Trotzman who did a helluva investigation in linking the Avianca bombing which we'll get into a bit later, into La Quika.

00:55:02;23 So... I think it was Judge... is it Sterling Johnson in New York, famous judge and good friend of ours, I think sentenced him to like ten life... life terms. So he is still in jail and you know what, we never found out what he was doing in the United States. I mean he was going

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to do something... terrorist, but we could never put it together and even to this date he is still in jail.

00:55:32;17 And his brother, Branz, he was killed... in Mediene by Los Papos which you know I'll get into a bit later. That's Escobar's arrest picture, I like and I show it cause it shows that dignity like I don't care, hey, you know I'm... you call it my Jim Adene picture of Escobar, it's the first time he got arrested.

00:55:53;24 From there on... as mentioned again, Escobar was probably one of the world's ruthless traffickers. "Forbes" magazine at one point declared him one of the richest persons in the United States. And I wish you know, I mean some of you all have the seen the lavish ranch houses they used to have, the underground tunnels leading from the swimming pools.

00:56:16;02 To them money was no problem. They would import the best architects from Europe, once they would build their ranch sites, they built their safe hiding places, they would have them killed so no one knew of the hiding places.

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And we started experiencing a lot of I guess blood shed in the area, mid '80s, late '80s, early '90s, you had the cocaine wars.

00:56:41;24 Some of you guys from Miami experienced it. Some of you guys from New York experienced it. The Mediene Cartel was famous for moving their dope to the Miami areas in the United States. But it was getting out of control, the violence was erupting at the Dateland Mall, some of you guys remember this.

00:57:03;12 The undercover negotiations, the arrests would else end up shooting so and it was experiencing the same thing in Columbia. I usually like to say that the difference between the Mediene and Callie Cartel was that the Mediene was wild, wild West where as the Callie Cartel was more of a business organized. They had the computers, they had the coat and ties.

00:57:28;13 And I hate to say it, I mean during the Escobar war, we... we favored you know going after Escobar and we sort of... forgot about the Callie Cartel which you know made

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them stronger, made them more powerful with their dope. Like I said we were focusing on Escobar. I would like to say that it was... it was righteous.

00:57:52;06 Escobar was killing a lot of police officers, was bombing buildings, was killing men, women, children. He replaced car bombs... there'd be like two or three car bombs a day in Bogotá, there'd be two or three a day in Mediene. Escobar had his... had a bounty on police officers. By a bounty I mean... if people were to kill 10 police officers a day that he would pay them two to three-hundred dollars a day for each police officer that they were killing.

00:58:22;24 At the end of the day, the Sicario (ph.) would go to a house and alright, hey, I killed 10 police officers today, \$200 each and he would get paid, it was that bad. So the cops, you know the Columbia national police during this time really focused their efforts on finding Escobar and... I usually like to refer to the Escobar days as two... two different wars.

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00:58:52;29 The first one was when he surrendered and he surrendered because of the pressure that was being put on by the Columbia national police and during this time like I say, it was a cooperative effort. DEA was working with the Columbia national police, was working with the military, was going after... after Escobar.

00:59:16;20 And as you recall during the first wars when Escobar blew up the Das Building. The Das Building in Columbia is like the FBI, their FBI. And he really hated the general which you saw here in the video clip was General Miguel Masamadres (ph.). He sort of, Escobar... accused Masamadres of leading a right wing death squad against him, against Escobar.

00:59:45;05 And... General Masamadres at this time teamed up with the Columbia national police, General Lotiva Vargas Silva and they formed a task force if you will, against Escobar, they started targeting all his money launderers, his labs, all his financial institutions. So when you saw the video clip of their presidential campaign, Luis Carlos Golan being assassinated, Escobar as recalled, one

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of the things he mostly feared was extradition.

01:00:23;27 He came up with a term called [SPANISH] and this was called by the extraditables [SPANISH] you know which I'd rather die in Columbia then be sent to the United States. And... Luis Carlos Golan at this time was campaigning for extradition, he was going to win and you know during the constitutional Columbia, extradition was unconstitutional.

01:00:54;17 We were finding evidence from Congressmen, some of you all have seen a famous clip which shows one of Pablos Escobar's attorneys, Mustafa (ph.), Anon Mustafa paying off a constitutional member in a hotel room. And we... that was video taped and everybody knows that we were the ones that made the video tape in the hotel room. DEA, we had an informant who came in and said, hey, this Congressman wants to cooperate.

01:01:27;23 He's going to paid off today... I remember I always give the credit to Gary Sheridan who said, hey, you know what, let's a put a camera in the lamp of the hotel room. So

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we did it and just like in the movies, the... the attorney sat right in front of the camera and in plain words said, hey, on behalf of Escobar here's your money and vote for no extradition.

01:01:50;20 This is how bad it was. I mean Escobar went to the extents of bombing the Das Building, he killed a minister of justice, Lotta Boniea. He killed one of our good friends, Colonel Ramedas who was responsible for all the (unint.) raids, which were all the biggest labs in Columbia.

01:02:10;00 He was ruthless, I mean there's even a video... I mean a telephone intercept where Escobar's talking to his wife. In the background you hear a guy being tortured, yelling. Escobar tries to cover up the phone and tells the people in the back, hey, cover his mouth and continues talking to his wife, I love you, yeah, I mean like no... no problem whatsoever.

01:02:31;27 So... it was really after Galon gets assassinated, the presidential candidate, and I remember it's on a Friday

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night and we're all at restaurants of course on Friday night, everybody's out on the town and I remember it was like 11:00 that night where they started saying, hey, marshal law has taken place and you go outside are police cars, military were just running rampant.

01:02:58;23 You'd see all the sirens. We get a call that night from the general, what had happened is that the then president Ralio Barco Vargas declared extradition to be lawful under an administrative... decree. So in other words he didn't care what the Congress said, he didn't care what the constitution said, I really give credit to this president.

01:03:25;18 After Galon gets killed that night, the next morning we are rounding up some of the most vicious traffickers in Columbia. We're raiding house, ranches, it's an all out war. And... I also told the marshal being here, the marshal service was... did a great job for us. I remember they would come in with their 727 airplane, would park them at the airport.

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01:03:48;20 You had about 20 marshals all get off, dressed in black, armed to the teeth. I mean this was impressive. They'd be there in a heartbeat, take these traffickers back. So the word started getting around that they were not invincible, that we were starting to attack them. What happened is that Escobar then decided to... to surrender.

01:04:13;12 He negotiated through his people with the president of Columbia and he said if you let me surrender, I will surrender but under my conditions. I want my own prison built, I'm going to hire my own prison guards. I'm going to pay for my own prison guards and... and sadly to say that the government of Columbia said, yes, okay.

01:04:37;18 That was... I remember seeing that in the news... oh you should have seen... it was like we had lost, I mean we had lost the war on Escobar because here he is surrendering. Escobar had his own fan club, I mean he was... as ruthless, barbaric leader, he was also a charismatic Robin Hood type of a leader.

01:04:57;10 He built homes for the poor... helped out the church. He

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had a father by the name of Garcia Raros as president of his fan club. This father used to have a show called "Minuoto Adios" and that was on TV every night and this father would always say good a person Escobar was, all the money he was giving to the poor. So he had a... a great public image with a lot of those people during this time.

01:05:22;17 So he surrendered and like I said, all of us felt like wow, we lost... we lost the war and like I said my partner and I, Steve Murphy at the time, wow, and our boss, Joe Toff, we attended a lot of funerals or saw a lot of my good buddies from the Columbia national police get killed.

01:05:44;11 One, a good friend of mine, Captain Posada, who Escobar himself killed along with his son, went into his house. Another Captain, Montrio Pero, anyway he gets chopped up. I mean but even just the ordinary uniform police officers that were getting killed at this time. So it was a big disappointment to us. And I'm not faulting the government of Columbia.

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01:06:04;17 I mean they're... hey you know there's one of the worst traffickers who wants to surrender you know, the only problem is that they let him surrender in his own terms.

So as you all know, Escobar built his own prison, he hired his own... security prison guards and he took some of those traffickers with him to guard him at prison.

01:06:29;07 So in essence he was still sending out his dope loads, he was still killing people and enjoying it and doing it from the safety of the prison, La Cataral. And you know some of you all have seen the prison, I've got a couple of pictures later on. But the front part was a facade, it was just some bars.

01:06:52;10 But then you'd go in and you would see he would have his lavish apartments and then to top it off, what he did, he built what he called his chalet, so the back part of the mountain that was besides the prison, those were his fancy apartments. He had the best TVs, 50 inch TVs back during this time. They had all the... sexy negligee for the women that would come in and party every night.

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01:07:22;05 So like I said, he was protected, nobody... still running his dope. There was one incident that really and I said, I go back to the greed part of it. While in prison he had got word... this is by the way, this is one of Escobar and Gotcah's labs in Magdalena Medua area. I don't know if you can tell, but the bottom is all camouflaged.

01:07:48;08 The top is camouflaged and the bottom is one of the biggest labs that... that ever existed in Columbia. And you can't really tell the way that it's camouflaged. These were little cities. The labs were little cities, they had a mayor, they had a hospital, they had a dentist office, they had their own rules.

01:08:05;23 You know they were producing a thousand keys of coke on a daily basis. Getting back to Escobar at the prison, he was still doing like I said, his own thing, and unprotected. The US was getting a lot of intelligence during this time and there was one particular incident that we really were able to convince the Columbian

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government, hey, that's... enough is enough.

01:08:27;26 What had happened... one of Escobar cigaros robs or steals \$10 million and like I said and this was told to us by a person who was in the middle of this. They take \$10 million but it's in the ground, it's buried. The money is crumpling, it is deteriorated and... it is... it's no good anymore, nobody can use it. So they take it to Escobar at the prison and he has a fit.

01:09:01;24 I mean what I understand is he goes crazy and he summons his two best guys who... who had the money, this \$10 million and they were Fernando Galyono and... Kiko Moncada. So he summons them up to this prison and just goes ballistic on 'em and so that they're telling me that the rage he had was that he killed one of them with his own hands, they cut him up, chopped him up, burned him.

01:09:29;22 And he had the other person killed. And remember, this were his two childhood friends who were moving all his dope for him, who were giving him all the money and he was also collecting what he called a war tax on other

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traffickers. In other words if I'm John Doe, I'm doing 100 keys, 50 keys are for me, Pablo Escobar because I'm fighting the government of Columbia for you.

01:09:52;23 So I mean he was still running his empire but after he kills this people, like I said we went to the president of Columbia and told him what was going on. So a decision was made to move him. Why they brought in the military and not the police, they thought if they brought in the police to move him that they would kill him, you know stage a shoot out and kill him, which, hey probably would have happened.

01:10:23;04 I mean I hate to agree but it probably would have happened. So they decided on bringing in the Columbian military and... they went into the prison, Escobar was waiting for 'em. The prison guards had a shoot out with the Columbian military. Escobar took in a hostage, took in the deputy attorney general Columbia as hostage and he walked out the front door.

01:10:46;07 So that night the second war, the hunt for Escobar was on

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again. We were excited, we were thrilled, in fact Steve and I were in Mediene the following day, we were at the prison system where a lot of those pictures you see and the posters, we got from the prison system. And I remember the ambassador. We had a real strong hands-on ambassador at the time, the Columbia Ambassador Buzby, he was ex-military, very strong.

01:11:15;08 And so we teamed up, DEA with the Colombian national police. In fact the Colombian national police requested that DEA be... be allowed to live with them in Mediene. They formed what they called [SPANISH], a search block. And this search block was made up of the best of the best of the Colombian national police. They brought in Colonel Martinez Provera who's really another truly great hero in Columbia, was liaison officer I think in Spain.

01:11:48;18 He was involved in the first search for Escobar. They brought him in, you saw the first guy, Aguillar, they brought him in because all these people were involved in the first hunt and they brought in the best of the best. The [SPANISH] we lived in a police-base in Mediene... in

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Enregado and it was wow, just... conditions were bad there I think.

01:12:12;29 Steve and I were sleeping with like 10 other guys and you know one bathroom for everybody. But it was operations on a daily basis, on a nightly basis. They had the uniform people, which they must have had like 1000 uniform people. They had the non-uniform people. And then Columbia also brought in their Columbian military, Columbian doas (ph.) like experts from everybody's field and just living in Mediene and chasing Escobar.

01:12:38;09 It was along, the second chase like I said, it started out good, we're getting a lot of... radio interceptions, Escobar was here, was there. However he was always in the mountain areas of Mediene and we were always missing him. But because of the terrain, the helicopters, we would get there, he was already gone. We knew he had been there.

01:13:01;08 And so were barely missing him, but I also like to say that another critical point that happened during this

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second search, was that a group of traffickers that used to work for Escobar formed and they were called the Notorious Los Pepos [SPANISH]. So you all I know have heard of them... and it was a right-wing vigilante death squad.

01:13:28;16 What Los Pepos were doing was targeting Escobar's family members, targeting his attorneys and I'll be honest, at the beginning, they had a lot of public support cause they were bombing his houses, killing his associates. They started getting a little out of hand when they started killing children. I remember they killed one of Escobar's attorneys.

01:13:55;13 They killed his son with him, so the public really started now saying, hey, there's... this is not right. The police were accused a lot of working with Los Pepos which, like I said, Steve and I were there, you know we never saw it. There was some informants that were assigned to police that later on we found out they were part of Los Pepos.

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01:14:19;05 But these informants had been authorized to work by then Attorney General Gustavo Degradé. But anyway, the search block was on and... operations were on a daily basis. Steve and I, you know, lived there with the cops. We had an 800 number, which we used to answer as the Columbians felt that they trusted the gringos more and they used to talk to us.

01:14:43;11 We had a \$5 million reward going on Escobar... we just... our intel division and I saw Craig Instacona, Pat Kerner, I mean we teamed up with them and it was an all out effort. Also I remember during this time there was leadership of (unint.) who had a financial vision, I mean we were attacking all his... accounts, we were freezing accounts left and right.

01:15:14;08 We were doing raids, we'd bring back the evidence, seizing accounts. I remember... Sheila Smith out of I think Jacksonville was able to seize \$85 million in a Switzerland account that belonged to Gotcha and this money... Columbia eventually got some of this money back, but it was just going after the accounts, doing an all

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out war.

01:15:32;03 This lasted like I said about a year and what we were seeing is that Escobar was beginning to fall. At the beginning and this is I think one of the reasons we never caught him is that we thought Escobar was at a location, we would wait for backup for you know 200 uniform people to go in. By the time we went in, he was gone, same thing at the mountains and the ranches.

01:15:59;14 Towards the end like I said, Los Pepos was doing a number on Escobar. The police were arresting and/or killing people in shoot outs in Mediene so his empire was crumbling. He... we had people who started calling and saying hey Escobar's at this house whereas before nobody went up against Escobar.

01:16:24;13 So what I'm saying is the greed of the money that he killed his two best associates was what turned this traffickers against him. And like I said earlier, I think the Callie Cartel really was able to flourish and... and you know and there's been criticisms and it is

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probably right. We let them alone but as police officers would say, it was a personal vendetta against Escobar.

01:16:50;08 As many people as he killed they didn't care about the dope or the money, it was a personal vendetta against him. So towards the end like I said, the other really straw that broke the camel's back was... his family. He was trying to get his family out of the way because he knew Los Pepos were targeting. In fact DEA was the ones that who came up with the intelligence.

01:17:17;10 He had his kids going to Miami and we came up with the information, we stopped them at the Mediene Airport, I remember I was there at the airport and those two kids, Juan Pablo Monilito, Monilito had all sorts of mental problems. I mean you can imagine a six-year-old little girl living through the hell she'd been living with, through her father.

01:17:40;00 And she was also partially deaf, one of the bombs at the Callie Cartel put in their building, so it was a bad situation. We were able to stop them, how they got visas

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we'll never know but they did have visas to go to Miami, we were able to stop them. And the next situation was... where he sent his family to Germany.

01:17:58;27 And we put an agent on the plane with them, we were able to talk to our German counterparts into not letting them stay there which they did not. They made them return to Columbia. So once Escobar is... is returning, once the family is returning to Columbia... he's talking with his son. And you know and this is what I tell people, it's movie material.

01:18:25;28 You know the father is Colonel Martinus Boweda and his son is a young lieutenant who is like their tech expert and is really good at DFing people, you know they had a... they're talking on the cell phone using trigger fish, DFing people. So Escobar and his son are... Escobar and Escobar's son are on the phone cause the just got returned back from... from Germany.

01:18:51;13 And Colonel Martinus's son is on patrol and is hearing the conversation, I mean this is really neat story. So

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he's DFing the signal going towards where it's coming from. All of a sudden the lieutenant and he's like 21 years old at this time, looks up at the window and sees Escobar on the phone.

01:19:12;04 I mean they both look at each other, Escobar knows it's the cops. The lieutenant knows it's Escobar and I also got to admire them for going in. Instead of waiting for backup, in fact, his father the colonel was saying, don't go in, wait for backup. They said hey, had about six guys, they went in, fire fight, Escobar is running through the roof, as you see here, you can see his picture here later on.

01:19:36;14 And the police are able to kill him and I mean it's the colonel's son who DFs him. A lot of confusion that day, in fact I'm glad Steve was there, not outside, he came in afterwards because there's been a lot of criticism. But Steve was the one who actually were able to take all these great pictures that we've seen. This is one of the stash sites they used to hide their dope in.

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01:20:01;06 But anyway when they... they called the mother, Escobar's mother to come in and identify the body. She sees one of his bodyguards laying on the... on the grass outside the house and she starts laughing and making fun against him, hey you got the wrong, that's not my son. She's laughing, having a good time.

01:20:21;07 And they say hey lady, you need to go up to the roof. Once she goes up to the roof, we know it's him. She's... she loses it, screaming, crying just so we know that it is Escobar. This were 10 tons that belonged to Escobar that were seized in the Montereia area of Columbia. See the markings, you all remember [SPANISH] 17 and some of the gold that we seized from Escobar, emeralds.

01:20:48;07 This was some of his lake retreats that were at the... Benoi area, which is a lake-side area of Mediene. I mean how they built this lavish houses, we'll never know, but they all belonged to Escobar. Oh this is Mr. Eston Connin besides the elephant there, Gary Sheridan. This is at Finkanapolis (ph.) Escobar's ranch. He had a zoo, he had a bull-fighting ring.

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01:21:14;17 You know he had supposed to belong... Al Capone's car, I mean the lavish houses, the parties we used to hear that was thrown there were just outrageous and some of you all remember... Mr. Wanko, Bobby Nevis... this is the... the bottom picture is where the chalets were located and you really can't seem them, they're located or were built into the mountain.

01:21:37;09 So the prison was in front and the lavish apartments were built into the part, which nobody could see. Doug Wanko, like I said Bobby Nevis was chief of OF at that time. That's me and Steve in Escobar's apartment, this is inside the prison. Some of the, talking about the terrorists, some of the C4 that we were seizing at this time, just tons of C4 that they were using for the car bombs.

01:22:05;14 Like I said the... the Das Building they used 500 kilos of dynamite that were transported inside wood, they would bury it, I mean it was just incredible. And this is... that's the Das Building that was blown up. That's the

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Avianca Building that La Quika perpetrated and he's doing a life sentence now in New York.

01:22:31;01 This on top is interesting, this was surface to air missiles we got. I don't know if you remember Senior President Bush took a trip to Columbia in '89 and Das was able to foil the plot that they were going to use to bomb one of the planes. I don't know if it would have worked but however they had plans to do it and that's the equipment they were going to do it with.

01:22:52;19 That's one of the guys they tortured, killed, Escobar, you know he just did all sorts of numbers on him, Taffee was an informant. This is Gaucha, the founder of the Mediene Cartel and his son, they were killed in '89 in a shoot out with the police. And last slide is Escobar lying on the roof top. And I would say, you know, this was one of the world's richest traffickers had all the money in the world.

01:23:19;09 I mean he even offered to pay Columbia's national debt at one time and look how he ends up, he's all bare-footed,

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all unkempt. He used to be an immaculate dresser, but during the search, during his run he had just, was just preoccupied with his safety. And lastly I would just like to also... I ended in that... I'm glad to say DEA had a big part in helping the Columbian national police.

01:23:50;10 But it was really the Columbian national police that are the true heroes in taking down one of the world's most ruthless, barbaric terrorists, traffickers that ever lived, anyway. Thank you very much. [APPLUASE]

01:24:24;17 Q: (Inaud.).

01:24:25;18 JP: A lot of other traffickers... that's why I always tell people we took down one of the world's most deadliest organizations. There's other people now who have replaced him, not Mediene but as you know the Callie traffickers are very big... the [SPANISH] traffickers, the whole Mediene people were really I think... put away, a lot of them are dead.

01:24:52;21 A lot of them are running. Escobar's wife is somewhere

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in Argentina I hear. I think she's also been arrested for money laundering. But you know Escobar, what happened is that Los Pepos they took all his properties away, other traffickers took all his ranches, properties, monies away, so towards the end he didn't have any money.

01:25:12;01 He had assets but he did not have the liquid cash that he needed to survive in this organization. Any questions... and I also want to thank also the guys who were there in Mediene during when it was really bad like Mike Vehill, Jose Monso who's also here, they were the real founders, Ero Chavez who opened up and closed the Mediene office.

01:25:41;13 So they really layed the groundworks for guys like us to come in and help them out. But like I said it was a... cooperative, joint effort between DEA and the national police and... there's also a lot of insinuations. You know a lot of other people will take credit, but you know we were there and I'm telling like it is. It's not other people taking credit, it was the national police who did a great job.

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01:26:08;06 Any other questions, yes.

01:26:12;18 Q: (Inaud.).

01:26:17;04 JP: Well I've been out of there for a couple of years. My last tour there in fact some analysts are here. Kerry, I know that the FARC was also getting onto the drug distribution so was the AUC and Kerry, you indicted, AUC people and like I said the FARC, we've indicted, our office in Columbia has indicted the top echelons.

01:26:36;22 During the time we were there the FARC was really more... not really into the dope, they were into the bombs, into the terrorist activities but I'm saying maybe five years ago they are now running their own labs, they are distributing their own drugs, so it's still... Columbia is a unique country.

01:27:02;07 We have great police institutions there, great military and... like I said I always people I mean we... maybe through our drug demand programs, our DARE programs we can you know always start doing something at home also.

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01:27:20;26 Another question? Thank you all very much. [APPLAUSE]

01:27:30;28 MS: I want to take just a minute again and thank Javier for spending time with us today. A reminder that our 30th anniversary series will continue next month on November 4th, retired special agent Rick Barrett will be coming, just retired a matter of I guess a month ago Susie, be speaking about his experiences in Chicago going after the gangster disciples in the 1980s.

01:27:53;04 Thank you all very much for coming, invite you if you haven't been to the Museum exhibit to... we do have a number of objects and photos that were donated by the Columbian national police when we opened and thank you call for coming today.

END OF TAPE