

LOCAL NEWS

Pringles, secret code, L.A. deputy used to smuggle heroin into lockup: report

by: [Josh DuBose](#)
Posted: Mar 9, 2025 / 07:47 PM PDT
Updated: Mar 9, 2025 / 08:04 PM PDT

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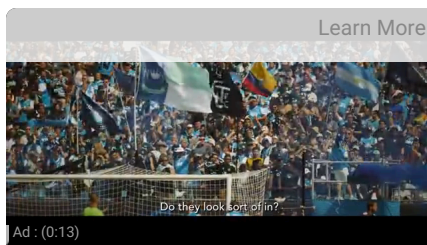
A 39-year-old Los Angeles County [deputy sheriff accused of smuggling heroin to inmates](#) reportedly conspired with gang “shot-callers” using a secret code and tubes of Pringles chips to move the drugs, according to a new report.

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In law enforcement records reviewed by the L.A. Times, Deputy Michael Meiser, arrested on April 30, 2024, investigators allege he brought more than a pound of black tar heroin hidden inside two cans of Pringles onto jail grounds shortly before he was taken into custody.

Deputy Meiser, who was assigned to a special unit that monitored gang activity at North County Correctional Facility in Castaic, the largest jail facility in the nation, is among [18 people indicted in the smuggling operation](#).

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The Mexican Mafia, a syndicate of an estimated 140 imprisoned senior Latino gang members, assigns inmates in specific jails to run drug and extortion schemes, The Times reported.

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Two such inmates at the North County Correctional Facility, both of whom are named in the indictment, are Jose Rodriguez, 47, and Jackie Triplett, 40.

In February last year, federal investigators intercepted calls by made by the two men where they used coded language, such as “white Jordans” or “black Jordans,” believed to be phrases designating methamphetamine and heroin.

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Two months later, in April 2024, Rodriguez was recorded on a call using coded language to have \$6,000 transferred to the Cash App of Meiser's brother-in-law. A day later, detectives with the Sheriff Department's Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau obtained a warrant to place a tracking device on Deputy Meiser's white 2018 BMW.

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On the morning of his arrest, investigators tailed Meiser from his Lancaster home to a gas station in Valencia where a person in a red SUV passed him a Sprout's grocery bag reportedly containing 1.128 pounds of black tar heroin wrapped in plastic inside the two tubes of Pringles.

The heroin, according to [The Times' reporting](#), was worth more than \$225,000 in the jail.

With guns drawn, sheriff's deputies stopped Meiser and his partner, Deputy Jose Munguia who is not named in the indictment, as they left jail grounds in Munguia's vehicle.

Inside Meiser's bag, detectives reportedly located envelopes holding \$15,000 in cash. Later, in a search of his home, authorities recovered another \$10,500 in his dresser drawer.

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Meiser has pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiring to distribute drugs in a jail and involvement in gang conspiracy. His lawyer did not immediately return requests for comment made by The Times.

A hearing in the smuggling case is scheduled for March 27 in downtown L.A.

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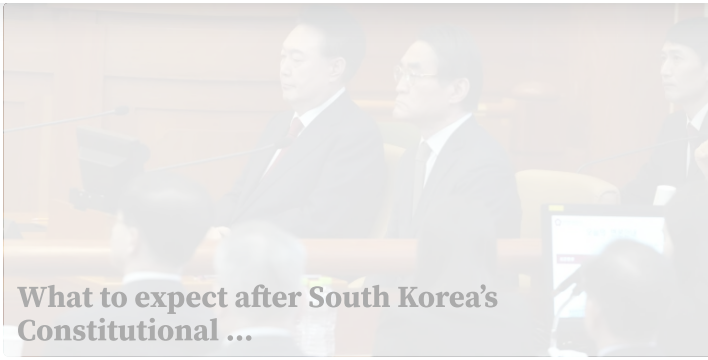
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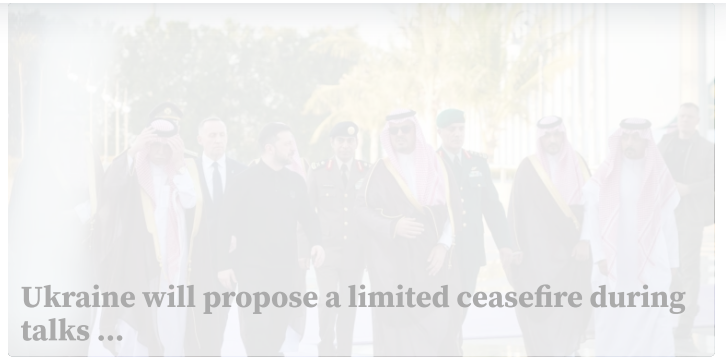
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