

Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán's trial: From shocking to bizarre

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"El Chapo" (right) is the highest-ranking alleged drug lord to face trial in the US so far

The trial of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán has provided shocking revelations about the Mexican drug lord's life.

Below are some of the most disturbing testimonies by witnesses in the high-profile trial in New York as well as some allegations which are plain bizarre.

Hi-tech murder room

A trusted hitman for "El Chapo kept" a "murder room" in his mansion on the US border, which featured a drain on the floor to more easily clean up after slayings.

Edgar Galvan testified in January that Antonio "Jaguar" Marrufo had a room with white tiles that was sound-proofed "so no noise comes out".

"In that house, no-one comes out," Galvan told jurors.

Galvan said his role in the organisation was to smuggle weapons into the US, so that Marrufo could use them to "clear" the region of rivals.

At the time, he was living in El Paso, Texas, while Marrufo was living in Ciudad Juarez, just across the US-Mexico border.

But both men are now in jail on firearms and gun charges.

Getty
Images



El Chapo's wife, Emma Coronel, sat quietly through a session where the FBI shared her husband's texts to his lovers
Narco-mistresses

"El Chapo" used his slew of mistresses to help further his narcotics operation - and his text history proves it, the FBI alleges.

Thanks to the Flexi-spy software Guzmán used to spy on his wife, Emma Coronel, and the women with whom he had affairs, the FBI was able to present his texts in court.

Guzmán and Ms Coronel fawned over their daughters in many texts, as parents do, but some had a distinctly "El Chapo" sensibility.

In one sent on the twins' six-month birthday, [the New York Daily News reported](#) , he said: "Our [daughter] is fearless, I'm going to give her an AK-47 so she can hang with me."

Another damaging series of texts relayed how El Chapo fled a villa during a raid by US and Mexican officials.

"I had to run out at three in the afternoon," Guzmán told his wife. "I saw them pounding on the door next door, but I was able to jump out."

- [The life of 'El Chapo'](#)
- [Who is 'El Chapo' Guzmán?](#)

He then reportedly asked her to bring him new clothes, shoes and black moustache dye.

Guzmán tracked around 50 people through phones and computers, according to the drug lord's ex-techie, Cristian Rodriguez.

Mr Rodriguez told the court "El Chapo" frequently turned on his lovers' microphones after ending calls with them "to see what they would say about him", the Daily News reported.

One of those lovers was Agustina Cabanillas Acosta, who allegedly helped "El Chapo" make deals across the region.

In between sweet nothings, they discussed drug shipments and "non-stop" sales.

The alleged kingpin also reportedly paid for Ms Acosta's liposuction.

Ms Acosta, meanwhile, was well aware of her lover's snooping - ["I'm way smarter than him," she reportedly texted her friends](#) .

Reuters

Lucero Guadalupe Sanchez Lopez, girlfriend (2nd left) of accused Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman (2nd right), testifies as his wife Emma Coronel (right) looks on

A \$100m presidential pay-off

A bombshell allegation came during testimony from Alex Cifuentes, a Colombian drug lord who has described himself as El Chapo's "right-hand man" and spent two years hiding from authorities with him in the Mexican mountains, prosecutors say.

Cifuentes claims former Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, who served from 2012-18, accepted a \$100m (£77m) bribe from El Chapo.

He alleges Mr Pena Nieto contacted El Chapo after taking office in 2012, asking for \$250m in return for ending a manhunt for the drug cartel kingpin. El Chapo instead offered him \$100m, which the new president allegedly accepted.

Mr Pena Nieto has not publicly commented on the allegations.

Enemy buried alive

In the most gruesome testimony to date, witness Isaias Valdez Rios described seeing "El Chapo" brutally beat at least three men before shooting them.

In one incident, Mr Valdez Rios said two people originally from Sinaloa who had joined the rival Los Zetas cartel were deemed traitors and rounded up by Guzmán's hitmen.

For more than three hours the drug lord brutally beat them, Guzmán's former bodyguard said.

"They were completely like rag dolls - their bones were totally broken. They could not move. And Joaquin was still hitting them with the branch and his weapon too," Mr Valdez Rios said.

The two men were later driven to an area where they could see a large bonfire.

There, the jury was told, "El Chapo" cursed each one before shooting them in the head with his rifle.

The leader of the Sinaloa cartel ordered that they be thrown in the bonfire, telling his men that he did not want any bones to remain, Mr Valdez Rios said.

He said the third man murdered by "El Chapo" was a member of the rival Arellano Felix cartel.

"He had burns made with an iron on his back, his shirt was stuck to his skin. He had burns made with a car lighter all over his body. His feet were burned," Mr Valdez Rios told the court.

The man was then locked in a wooden structure for days. Then he was brought blindfolded to a graveyard, his hands and legs bound.

"El Chapo" started to interrogate him, and while he was responding, shot him with his handgun.

The man was still gasping for air - but he was dumped in a hole and buried alive, Mr Valdez Rios said.

Prison escape

The secrets of the drug lord's daring escape from a Mexican maximum security prison in 2015 were revealed by a former cartel associate.

Testifying in court, Damaso Lopez said his boss' wife and sons had been involved from the start to get El Chapo out of Altiplano prison.

He mentioned secret meetings in 2014, where Emma Coronel delivered detailed instructions from her husband to the plotters.

"A tunnel had to be built and they [plotters] should start to work," Ms Coronel said.

Getty Images

"El Chapo" used a specially adapted motorcycle to ride through the tunnel

The kingpin's sons later bought a property near the prison, and the digging started.

A GPS watch was smuggled into the prison, giving the plotters exact co-ordinates where the drug lord's prison cell was.

The one-mile (1.6km) tunnel took months to complete, and "El Chapo" had complained that digging was too loud and he could hear the "noise" from his cell, Mr Lopez said.

He added that the concrete below his boss' cell "had been very difficult to break through".

Despite all the problems, "El Chapo" escaped in July 2015, riding on a specially adapted small motorcycle through the tunnel.

Naked escapades

Yet another mistress, Lucero Guadalupe Sanchez Lopez, revealed to the court details of the drug lord's 2014 escape from Mexican marines.

When the marines burst into his safehouse, Ms Lopez said the alleged drug lord took off running - stark naked.

They used an escape tunnel under a bathtub to flee, trudging through mud for an hour before surfacing, [according to the New York Post](#) .

As the mistress began to cry while testifying, the drug lord's wife, Ms Coronel, reportedly cackled in the gallery.

Just days after his affair with Ms Lopez, "El Chapo" would be captured by authorities - once again naked - in bed with Ms Coronel.

She and her husband were both in matching burgundy-coloured jackets during Ms Lopez's testimony, in an attempt to show their solidarity, reports the BBC's Tara McKelvey from court.

Blinged-out weaponry

The drug lord's reputed extravagance extended even to his extensive collection of weaponry, the trial has heard.

Among his prized possessions were a diamond-encrusted, monogrammed pistol and a gold-plated AK-47.

Reuters

A diamond-encrusted pistol that allegedly belonged to Mr Guzmán

Fatal handshake snub

Much of the evidence against the suspected narco chief has come from the prosecution's star witness, Jesús Zambada.

Mr Zambada testified that the alleged drug kingpin had the brother of another cartel leader killed because he did not shake Guzmán's hand.

Rodolfo Fuentes had met Guzmán to make peace in a cartel and gang war, the court heard.

"When [Rodolfo] left, Chapo gave him his hand and said, 'See you later, friend,' and Rodolfo just left him standing there with his hand extended," Mr Zambada said.

Mr Fuentes and his wife were shot and killed outside a cinema soon afterwards.

- [Mexico president rejects 'El Chapo' claims](#)
- ['El Chapo' fan rejected from his jury](#)

Former Sinaloa lieutenant Miguel Angel Martinez also testified for the government, telling the jury he once asked "El Chapo" why he killed people.

"And he answered me: 'Either your mom's going to cry or their mom's going to cry.'"

Death for lying

A former cartel leader told the court how "El Chapo" once [had his own cousin killed](#) after the man lied about being out of town.

Juan Guzman had told the drug boss he would be travelling, only to be spotted at a park in the city.

"My compadre became angry, because he had lied to him," ex-cartel capo Damaso Lopez Nunez said.

To make an example out of Juan, "El Chapo" allegedly ordered him to be interrogated and assassinated. Juan's secretary, who was with him at the time, was also killed.

The drug boss' mistress Ms Lopez later told the court she remembered being with him when the news of Juan's death arrived.

"He said from that point on, whoever betrayed him, they would die," Ms Lopez said. "Whether they were family or women, they were going to die."

328 million lines of coke

Assistant US Attorney Adam Fels said in his opening argument that "El Chapo" had sent "more than a line of cocaine for every single person in the United States" - in just four of his shipments.

That amounts to over 328 million lines of cocaine, said the prosecutor.

Mr Zambada said that once, in 1994, Guzmán gave the order to sink a boat carrying 20 tonnes of cocaine to evade authorities.

AFP

Drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán is escorted into a helicopter at Mexico City's airport following his recapture during an intense military operation in Los Mochis, in Sinaloa State

Bazooka target practice

The court also heard that Guzmán once used a bazooka for target practice - to relax on a family holiday.

Mr Zambada said "El Chapo" took the anti-tank rocket launcher with him on a trip with relatives in 2005.

He [decided to "test out" the weapon](#) after the group had finished target practice with assault rifles, according to the witness.

A \$50m bribe fund

Some of the biggest news from testimony was how the Sinaloa cartel allegedly paid off a host of top Mexican officials to ensure their drug business ran smoothly.

Mr Zambada said the traffickers had \$50m (£39m) in protection money for former Mexican Secretary of Public Security García Luna, so that corrupt officers would be appointed to head police operations.

Mr Zambada said he gave the money to Mr Luna in briefcases full of cash. Mr Luna has denied the allegations.

When former Mexico City Mayor Gabriel Regino was in line to become the next secretary of security, Mr Zambada says the cartel bribed him, too.

Mr Regino, who is now a professor, has also denied the claims.

'Narco-saint' at court

A 6in (15cm) figurine of a folk hero dubbed the narco-saint has been spotted on a shelf in a conference room used by the defendant's lawyers at the court, [the New York Post reported](#) .

[The statue of Jesús Malverde](#) , which has him seated on a purple throne with bags of cash, appeared on Wednesday, one of Guzmán's lawyers told the newspaper.

Jesús Malverde has been celebrated as a Robin Hood-type hero who, legend says, stole from the rich and gave to the poor in the early 1900s.

A private zoo

Mr Martinez told the court Guzmán was so wealthy, he had a private zoo on top of his numerous properties - including a \$10m (£8) beach house as well as a yacht he named after himself ("Chapito").

Built in the early '90s, El Chapo's zoo reportedly had lions, tigers, and crocodiles, as well as a little train to ferry guests through it.

The property also had a house, pool and tennis courts nearby, Mr Martinez said.

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