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DEA LEAD INVESTIGATION RESULT IN 110 INDIVIDUALS INDICTED FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF BAYAMÓN, PUERTO RICO

SAN JUAN, PR – Rosa Emilia-Rodríguez-Vélez, United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico, announced today that on July 14, 2010, a federal grand jury indicted one hundred and ten (110) individuals as a result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Puerto Rico Police Department (PRPD) - Bayamón Strike Force. The defendants are charged in a two-count indictment with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute narcotics and controlled substances. Count two charges twenty (20) defendants of using and carrying firearms during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

Today over 350 agents from the DEA, ATF, and the PRPD Bayamón Strike Force executed the 110 arrest warrants in the at the Virgilio Dávila, Las Gardenias, Brisas de Bayamón and Falin Torrech Public Housing Projects and other areas in Bayamón, PR announced Javier F. Peña, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Caribbean Division and Hugo Barrera, Special Agent In Charge of ATF Miami Division.

The drug trafficking organization is one to the most violent gangs in the Bayamón area. Defendant José Colón De Jesús, aka “Marcian” was the leader of the conspiracy, which had drug points in Virgilio Dávila, Las Gardenias, Brisas de Bayamón and Falin Torrech Public Housing Projects and other areas in Bayamón. He was arrested for the charges mentioned above on April 30 by DEA agents, after he was acquitted by the state court of forty-one (41) charges for the Pájaros massacre, where a two year old girl was brutally murdered. Defendant number nine (9), Jorge Reyes Santiago, aka “Peca,” was also acquitted for the Pájaros massacre.

The defendants are charged with participating in a conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute controlled substances for significant financial gain and profit. The defendants and their co-conspirators would purchase wholesale quantities of heroin, cocaine and marijuana in order to distribute the same in street quantity amounts at their drug distribution points. The leaders would maintain a group of co-defendants administrating the activities of the drug distribution points. The leaders of this organization would divide among themselves and their subordinates the proceeds of the drug trafficking sales.

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The “drug owners” would often receive proceeds from the sale of specific controlled substances. These controlled substances were sold in distinctive baggies@, vials or packaging, using specific seals (“sellos”) or stickers in order to identify, and maintain control of the drugs distributed at the drug distribution points. They would use apartments in order to package and conceal the heroin, crack, cocaine, marijuana, pills, equipment and the materials used to process and package the controlled substances (drug paraphernalia). The members of the drug trafficking organization would use force, violence and intimidation in order to gain and maintain control of their drug points and in order to intimidate rival drug trafficking organizations and/or expand their drug trafficking activities.

The one hundred and ten (110) co-conspirators had many roles, in order to further the goals of the conspiracy, including: five (5) leaders, nine (9) managers/drug owners, one (1) supplier, two (2) enforcers, including one female defendant number seventeen [17] Griselle Lacosta Franco; seventeen (17) runners, fifty (50) sellers, twenty-two (22) lookouts and four (4) facilitators.

“Today, federal and state law enforcement agencies join forces in removing this drug trafficking organization which for many years had been intimidating the citizens of the municipality of Bayamón with their violence and has been spreading the scourge of illegal drugs in this town and neighboring communities,” said Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez, U.S. Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico.

“Today’s DEA joint operation with ATF and PRPD is another example of DEA’s commitment with the People of Puerto Rico in fighting the crime wave affecting our island to bring peace to our communities and make our neighborhoods safer” stated Javier F. Peña, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Caribbean Division. “DEA will continue working hand in hand with PRPD’s Strike Forces targeting violent drug trafficking organizations operating in every corner of Puerto Rico. DEA’s joint effort with PRPD will not stop until the violence subsides and the organizations collapse.”

“This partnership and targeted enforcement operation has demonstrated law enforcement’s commitment to rid our communities from these gangs that solely deal in Guns. Drugs and Death”, said Hugo Barrera, Special Agent In Charge of ATF.

The case was investigated by DEA, ATF and PRPD, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jenifer Y. Hernández Vega and Special Assistant United States Attorneys César Rivera Giraud and Mario Torres Marín.

If convicted, the defendants face a minimum of ten (10) years imprisonment and a maximum of life imprisonment, with fines of up to \$4 million. Criminal indictments are only charges and not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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