



*United States Attorney
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**DRUG KINGPIN CONVICTED OF RUNNING HEROIN
ORGANIZATION IN THE BRONX AND QUEENS**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JOSE RODRIGUEZ NIEVES, a/k/a "Menor," a/k/a "Cuba," was found guilty late yesterday of charges related to his leadership of a highly lucrative drug organization responsible for distributing hundreds of kilograms of heroin in the Bronx from 1995 to January 2005. The trial took place before the Honorable Loretta A. Preska and a jury. According to the evidence at trial:

RODRIGUEZ was the principal organizer, leader, and administrator of a drug organization that obtained hundreds of kilograms of heroin from Colombian suppliers in Queens, New York, and then prepared the heroin for distribution in the Bronx. During the ten-year period, RODRIGUEZ employed over a dozen people to work in heroin "mills" where bags of heroin were prepared, packaged, and delivered to heroin distribution "spots" in the Bronx.

In preparing the heroin, RODRIGUEZ and his workers mixed the heroin with chemicals including animal tranquilizers to create a potent and addictive drug that became popular with drug addicts and other users in the Bronx. RODRIGUEZ and other members of the drug organization used a number of vehicles with hidden compartments or "traps" to transport the kilograms of heroin within the New York City area. Specifically, RODRIGUEZ's heroin was sold in the vicinity of Bryant Avenue in Bronx, New York -- where his mother used to own a townhouse in which agents seized ammunition and evidence relating to RODRIGUEZ's heroin organization -- and in the vicinity of Vyse Avenue, also in the Bronx. In the ten years that RODRIGUEZ's organization was in operation, it earned millions of dollars from heroin sales. During the course of the investigation, law enforcement agents and officers seized over \$2.7 million in cash, 108 pieces of jewelry worth more than \$160,000, and several expensive and antique vehicles.

RODRIGUEZ was convicted of leading and organizing a continuing criminal enterprise ("CCE"), conspiring to distribute heroin, and possessing heroin with the intent to distribute it. He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of life imprisonment on the CCE count, and mandatory minimum sentences of 10 years and maximum sentences of life on the heroin conspiracy and distribution counts. RODRIGUEZ is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge PRESKA on May 7, 2006.

Other individuals who participated in RODRIGUEZ's heroin organization were arrested and have subsequently pleaded guilty to heroin trafficking and/or firearms offenses. These defendants include:

- JULIO CRUZ ANDINO, a/k/a "Julio Ismael Cruz," a/k/a "Julio Andino Cruz," a/k/a "Julio Andino," a/k/a "Julio Cruzismael," who pleaded guilty on September 14, 2006;
- LUIS ANTONIO CABAN who pleaded guilty on September 22, 2006;
- MELVIN GONZALEZ CORDOBA who pleaded guilty on October 24, 2006;
- JESUS MORALES, a/k/a "Tony," a/k/a "Carlos Perez," who pleaded guilty on September 12, 2006;
- RAYMOND ALICEA who pleaded guilty on September 5, 2006;
- CARLOS ALICEA who pleaded guilty on September 15, 2006;
- MARTIN BLAS ALICEA, a/k/a "Martin Alice," a/k/a "Martin O. Alicea," who pleaded guilty on September 6 2006;
- JOVANNY CORREDOR who pleaded guilty on September 7, 2006;
- EPIFANIO DICENT, a/k/a "John Dicent," who pleaded guilty on September 18, 2006;
- PAQUITO RODRIGUEZ who pleaded guilty on November 6, 2006;
- EDWIN SUAREZ, a/k/a "Tato," who pleaded guilty on May 30, 2006; and
- JEFFREY CARDONA who pleaded guilty on March 9, 2005.

All of these individuals await sentencing.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the Drug

Enforcement Administration and the New York City Police Department for their assistance in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of RODRIGUEZ and many members of his organization.

Assistant United States Attorneys REED M. BRODSKY and GURUANJAN S. SAHNI are in charge of the prosecution.

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