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**LEADER OF VIOLENT ARMED ROBBERY CREW CONVICTED OF
ORDERING 1999 MURDER OF FEMALE DRUG COURIER**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JOSE HERNANDO RODRIGUEZ, a/k/a "Porcelana," was convicted in Manhattan federal court earlier today of ordering the murder of a female drug courier in March, 1999. United States District Judge THOMAS P. GRIESA presided over the nine-day trial. The jury convicted RODRIGUEZ of one count of intentional murder and one count of murder committed with a firearm. According to the evidence at trial:

RODRIGUEZ was the leader of a violent armed robbery crew which committed dozens of armed robberies in Queens throughout the 1990s. RODRIGUEZ and his men routinely used violence and torture to extract information from their victims about the location of money, jewelry, or drugs. Testimony at trial included that of victims of several of those robberies.

RODRIGUEZ and his crew relied on information, or tips, from various sources in order to find the jewelers and drug dealers they robbed, including from JOEL SPIGELMAN, a/k/a "Judas," a jeweler who operated a business on 47th Street in the Diamond District in Manhattan for many years. SPIGELMAN provided the names and addresses of his own jewelry and drug customers in return for a share of the proceeds of the robberies of his customers.

In March of 1999, RODRIGUEZ received a tip from SPIGELMAN that a female drug courier would be delivering 50 kilograms of cocaine to SPIGELMAN's residence in Queens, and would have another 150 kilograms for other customers in the trunk of her car. SPIGELMAN gave this tip to RODRIGUEZ on the explicit condition that if he committed the robbery of the 150 kilos, he would have to kill the courier so that the robbery could not be traced back to SPIGELMAN. RODRIGUEZ accepted the job.

On March 17, 1999, the robbery was committed as planned

and, on RODRIGUEZ's order, ALEX RESTREPO executed the woman with a single gunshot to the back of the head. The woman's body was dumped in Forest Park in Queens and has never been identified.

Following a 2007 jury trial before United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN, SPIGELMAN was convicted of three counts of murder related to his role in the 1999 killing. ALEX RESTREPO was convicted of murdering former New York City Police Officer DONALD PAGANI, among other crimes, after a jury trial before Judge SCHEINDLIN in 2002. Both SPIGELMAN and RESTREPO are currently serving life sentences.

At sentencing, RODRIGUEZ, 39, faces up to life in prison.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys MARISSA MOLÉ and DAVID V. HARBACH, II are in charge of the prosecution.

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