



# Department of Justice

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## KIDNAPPERS OF DRUG DEALER PLEAD GUILTY

### *Drug Dealer Was Chained in Gwinnett Basement For a Week As Captors Demanded \$300,000 Drug Debt*

Atlanta, GA - VICTOR ABILES GOMEZ, 20, OMAR MENDOZA-VILLEGAS, 19, and GERARDO SOLORIO REYES, a/k/a "Gera," 23, all illegal immigrants from Mexico, pleaded guilty late yesterday to federal hostage-taking and related charges, arising from the week-long kidnapping and torture of a drug dealer.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of the case, "The methods employed by Mexican drug dealers to collect money are becoming increasingly violent, threatening not only the well-being of those directly involved but also innocent bystanders living in neighborhoods being infiltrated by participants in the drug trade. This case should send a clear signal that drug-related violence will not be tolerated in our community. And the captive drug dealer's guilty plea also demonstrates that we will not tolerate the drug trafficking that leads to this violence."

Rodney G. Benson, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division said of the guilty pleas, "DEA and its law enforcement counterparts are committed to protecting our citizens from the scourge of drug abuse. The swift actions taken by law enforcement personnel that day clearly saved this man's life. These guilty pleas should serve as a reminder that drug trafficking and the associated violence that it spawns will not be tolerated."

According to U. S. Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: On the afternoon of July 11, 2008, acting on information about a possible hostage taking, federal and local authorities established surveillance of a house located at 755 East Fork Shady Drive, Lilburn, Georgia. Three individuals inside the house apparently saw the police presence and began to flee. DEA Strike Force and FBI SWAT agents, working in conjunction with Gwinnett County authorities, quickly and successfully extricated the victim, later identified as OSCAR REYNOSO, 31, who is originally from the Dominican Republic but more recently from Rhode Island. At the time of his rescue, REYNOSO was bound and gagged and appeared to be severely de-hydrated and badly beaten. Agents found him chained to a mattress in the unfinished basement of the home, which is described as a middle-class

neighborhood residence in Gwinnett County. Also found in the basement were flex cuffs and firearms, including an assault rifle. When authorities found REYNOSO inside the basement, he appeared to be hyperventilating. Agents immediately removed his gag and provided him with fluids and medical attention.

Talking to REYNOSO, as well as one of his captors, agents learned that REYNOSO had been lured to Atlanta from Rhode Island, purportedly to complete a vehicle purchase transaction with an individual identified as "Tio." REYNOSO had met Tio at a nearby fast food restaurant, from where the two then rode to the 755 East Shady Fork Drive residence. Upon entering the garage, REYNOSO was ambushed and assaulted by eight men carrying firearms. After being beaten, he was imprisoned in the basement where the agents ultimately found him. While holding REYNOSO, his captors, including Tio, contacted REYNOSO's friends and relatives in Rhode Island in an effort to collect the drug debt of \$300,000. REYNOSO was constantly threatened and beaten during the ordeal.

REYNOSO pleaded guilty on March 10, 2009, to conspiring to possess with the intent to distribute at least 5 kilograms of cocaine. His sentencing date has not yet been scheduled.

The kidnappers appeared in federal court late yesterday, where they pleaded guilty to federal hostage-taking, drug trafficking, and firearm charges before United States District Court Judge Jack T. Camp. They face a maximum sentence of life in federal prison. Sentencings for the kidnappers will be held on July 7, 2009, at 10 a.m. before Judge Camp.

The DEA says the investigation of this incident is continuing, and is still looking for REYNOSO's other captors. Anyone with information is asked to call the DEA-Atlanta Field Division at 404-893-7100.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the DEA-Atlanta, with assistance from the FBI's SWAT Team, the Gwinnett County Police Department, and the Fayette County Sheriff's Department.

Assistant United States Attorneys Scott Hulsey and Cassandra Schansman are prosecuting the case.

For further information, please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charlysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).