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***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
HERBERT HADAD, YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL, JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(914) 993-1900, (212) 637-2600**

**LENGTHY SENTENCES IMPOSED ON THREE FOR MULTIPLE TRUCK
HIGHJACKINGS AND KIDNAPINGS**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ANGEL DIAZ, JORGE CEDENO, and RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ were sentenced today by United States District Judge COLLEEN MCMAHON for their roles in a series of armed truck highjackings in the tri-state area in fall 2006, during which the defendants kidnaped the truck drivers and stole the contents of their trucks. DIAZ, who participated in one kidnaping and armed truck hijacking, received a sentence of 37 years' imprisonment. CEDENO, who participated in two kidnapings and armed truck highjackings, received a sentence of 26 years and 7 months' imprisonment. RODRIGUEZ, who participated in three kidnapings and armed truck highjackings, received a sentence of 55 years' imprisonment.

The sentences followed a five-week jury trial in June and July 2009 before Judge MCMAHON in White Plains, New York.

Evidence presented at trial showed that between September 2006 and January 2007, the defendants operated an armed robbery crew, which targeted and hijacked tractor-trailers containing valuable cargo, including perfumes, cosmetic products, and cellular phones. During the robberies, the defendants brandished firearms, pistol-whipped truck drivers, tied the drivers up with plastic flex-ties, and restrained them in the sleeper cabins of their trucks while the robberies took place and the trucks were offloaded.

Specifically, on September 13, 2006, members of the crew hijacked a tractor-trailer containing more than half a million dollars worth of perfume products. Armed with guns, RODRIGUEZ and DIAZ stormed the truck while it was parked outside a warehouse in Blauvelt, New York. RODRIGUEZ and DIAZ pistol-whipped the two

drivers and forced them to the back of the cab, where they were held and restrained with plastic flex-ties. An accomplice drove the truck to a warehouse in New Jersey, where DIAZ and others unloaded the truck, after which it was abandoned in Clifton, New Jersey, with the kidnaped drivers still restrained inside. Eventually, the drivers called out for help from the truck window to passersby, who called the police.

Two months later, on November 13, 2006, the crew hijacked a tractor-trailer with a load of Verizon cellular phones at a rest area. RODRIGUEZ and CEDENO pistol-whipped the driver of the truck, restrained him plastic flex-ties, and held him in the back of the truck's sleeper cab. Another cohort then drove the truck to the Bronx where several of the robbers left to negotiate a deal to sell the hijacked goods. The remaining crew members watched the truck from a distance. The driver, who was restrained in the back of the cab, succeeded in breaking free and drove away until he was able to flag down a New York City police officer.

The evidence also showed that CEDENO and RODRIGUEZ had been involved in a third armed hijacking, of a tractor-trailer containing more than \$150,000 worth of Elizabeth Arden cosmetic products, in Pine Grove, Pennsylvania.

RODRIGUEZ was found guilty after trial of eight counts: conspiracy to commit kidnaping, conspiracy to commit armed robbery, two kidnaping counts, two armed robbery counts, and two firearms charges. DIAZ was found guilty of five counts: conspiracy to commit kidnaping, conspiracy to commit armed robbery, kidnaping, armed robbery, and a firearms charge. CEDENO was also found guilty of five counts: conspiracy to commit kidnaping, conspiracy to commit armed robbery, kidnaping, armed robbery, and a firearms charge.

Six other defendants -- German Cuadrado, Plutarco Angulo-Aguirre, Jorge Flores, Victor Diaz, Saile Parra, and Juan Camacho -- were charged as members of the crew, pleaded guilty, and will be sentenced in the coming months. Each of those defendants is subject to a maximum term of life imprisonment except for CAMACHO, who is subject to a maximum term of 25 years' imprisonment.

Mr. DASSIN praised the outstanding efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Orangetown Police Department in the investigation of this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys NOLA B. HELLER and MICHAEL A. LEVY are in charge of the prosecution.