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**DRUG BOSS WHO RAN HEROIN ORGANIZATION IN THE BRONX
SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON**

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 sentenced this afternoon to life in prison on charges relating to his leadership of a highly lucrative drug organization responsible for distributing hundreds of kilograms of heroin in the Bronx from approximately 1995 to January 2005. RODRIGUEZ was found guilty of the charges following a jury trial in February 2007. The sentence was imposed United States District Judge LORETTA A. PRESKA in Manhattan federal court. According to documents filed in this case and 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 a ten-year period, RODRIGUEZ employed over a dozen people to work in heroin "mills," where bags of heroin were prepared, packaged, and delivered to various 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 in the Bronx. RODRIGUEZ and other members of his 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 the Bronx – where his mother used to own a townhouse in which agents seized ammunition and other evidence relating to RODRIGUEZ's heroin business – 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 valued at over \$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. His conviction on the CCE charge carried a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment, which Judge PRESKA imposed. As part of RODRIGUEZ's sentence, Judge PRESKA also imposed an order of forfeiture in the amount of \$15 million, and described the evidence at trial as "simply overwhelming." She further stated that a life sentence was necessary to "provide adequate deterrence" and to "protect the public from further crimes of this defendant."

Other individuals who participated in RODRIGUEZ's heroin organization were arrested and 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, and was sentenced by Judge PRESKA on April 23, 2007, to 20 years in prison;
- LUIS ANTONIO CABAN, who pleaded guilty on September 22, 2006, and was sentenced by Judge PRESKA on November 9, 2007, to 11 years in prison;
- JESUS MORALES, a/k/a "Tony," a/k/a "Carlos Perez," who pleaded guilty on September 12, 2006, and was sentenced by Judge PRESKA on May 24, 2007, to 17-and-a-half years in prison;
- RAYMOND ALICEA, who pleaded guilty on September 5, 2006, and was sentenced by Judge PRESKA on February 15, 2007, to a 5 years in prison;
- MARTIN BLAS ALICEA, a/k/a "Martin Alice," a/k/a "Martin O. Alicea," who pleaded guilty on September 6, 2006, and was sentenced by Judge PRESKA on March 8, 2007, to over 7 years in prison; and
- JOVANNY CORREDOR, who pleaded guilty on September 7,

2006, and was sentenced by Judge PRESKA on March 23, 2007, to over 5 years in prison.

Mr. GARCIA praised the Drug Enforcement Administration and the New York City Police Department for their work in the investigation, arrests and prosecution of RODRIGUEZ and other members of his organization.

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

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