



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**ORGANIZER OF ARMED ROBBERY SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT  
TO 57 MONTHS IN PRISON**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ELMER ESPEJO was sentenced today by United States District Judge DEBORAH A. BATTS to 57 months' imprisonment for conspiring to commit an armed robbery in Englewood, New Jersey. During this gunpoint robbery, which occurred on August 11, 2002, a robbery crew organized by ESPEJO entered a private residence, tied up two children, and stole approximately \$100,000. ESPEJO pleaded guilty to a charge of conspiracy to commit armed robbery on June 7, 2006, just before he was to be tried on these charges.

According to the allegations in the Indictment and other court filings, in the summer of 2002, ESPEJO organized a crew that carried out an armed robbery of a private residence in Englewood, New Jersey, where ESPEJO believed they would find a large quantity of drug proceeds. ESPEJO, who ran a money remitting business in Englewood, knew the family that lived in this residence. ESPEJO recruited individuals to plan and carry out the armed robbery. On August 11, 2002, two armed gunmen entered the residence, tied up a 14-year old boy and a 10-year old boy, and stole approximately \$100,000. Several days after the robbery, ESPEJO shared in the robbery proceeds.

ESPEJO's sentencing brings to a close an investigation into home invasion robberies and drug dealing in the New York metropolitan area carried out by a crew headquartered on 184th Street in Manhattan. The investigation was conducted by the United States Attorney's Office, the REDRUM group of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Criminal Investigations Bureau of the Englewood, New Jersey Police Department. During the course of the investigation, a total of 16 individuals have been convicted of offenses including armed robbery, narcotics trafficking, and firearms offenses. One of these individuals, Joel Lopez, was convicted in March 2004 after a trial before the United States District Judge DENISE L. COTE. Lopez directed and organized a 2002 drug-related robbery in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City during which a woman and her teenage daughter were

assaulted and restrained. In September 2004, Joel Lopez was sentenced to 198 months' imprisonment.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Englewood, New Jersey Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorneys HARRY SANDICK and REED M. BRODSKY are in charge of the prosecution.

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