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**ESCAPED MURDERER PLEADS GUILTY TO
BANK FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN P. HIGGINS, Jr., the Inspector General of the United States Department of Education, announced that IVAN ORTA CUPRILL pleaded guilty earlier today to stealing the identity of another person and applying for student loans using that person's name and social security number. Significantly, at the time of those crimes, which took place from 1999 to 2002, CUPRILL was a wanted fugitive, having escaped from jail in Puerto Rico where he was serving a maximum 27-year sentence after having been convicted of murder and other crimes.

According to the Complaint and Indictment previously filed in Manhattan federal court and other statements on the record in this case, as well as court documents from Puerto Rico and CUPRILL's statements at today's plea proceeding before United States District Judge Deborah A. Batts:

Beginning in 1999, CUPRILL submitted applications for financial aid to attend the State University of New York at Old Westbury. In the applications, CUPRILL identified himself as "Jaime Torres" and used the Social Security number belonging to a person with that name. The loans were approved and funds were paid by Citibank USA to the college on CUPRILL's behalf. CUPRILL never repaid the loans.

At the time of his July 2006 arrest on these charges CUPRILL's true identity was not known. However, agents from the Department of Education in New York and Puerto Rico continued to investigate. They eventually identified the defendant as CUPRILL and learned that since 1994 CUPRILL had been wanted for escape from prison while serving a 27-year sentence for murder and other crimes.

CUPRILL pleaded guilty to both counts with which he was charged: bank fraud and identity theft. As a result of his plea, CUPRILL faces a maximum sentence of thirty years' imprisonment. He is scheduled to be sentenced before Judge Batts on September 10, 2007 at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the Department of Education.

Assistant United States Attorney JEFFREY A. BROWN is in charge of the prosecution.

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