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**FORMER NYPD OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO PARTICIPATING IN
COCAINE DISTRIBUTION AND ROBBERY RING**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that former New York Police Department ("NYPD") officer KIRSIX DE LA CRUZ pleaded guilty earlier today to participating in a conspiracy to steal cocaine from drug stash houses in Manhattan, and to keep a share of the proceeds from those robberies. At the time of the crimes, in July 2005, DE LA CRUZ was an active NYPD officer, and had registered to take the NYPD sergeant's examination. According to the Complaint and Indictment previously filed in Manhattan federal court, as well as DE LA CRUZ's statements at today's plea proceeding before United States Magistrate Judge THEODORE H. KATZ:

In July 2005, DE LA CRUZ introduced a co-conspirator not named in the Indictment ("CC-1") to one of DE LA CRUZ's co-defendants, LUIS GERMAN. DE LA CRUZ made the introduction because GERMAN knew the locations of drug stash houses around Manhattan, and was willing to share that information with DE LA CRUZ and CC-1. DE LA CRUZ, GERMAN, and CC-1 agreed that CC-1 would rob the drug stashhouses identified by GERMAN, and CC-1 would then share the proceeds of the robberies with DE LA CRUZ and GERMAN.

On July 13, 2005, the FBI arrested CC-1 shortly after he and another of DE LA CRUZ's co-defendants, MARKUS VIZANIARIS, had stolen cocaine from an apartment identified by GERMAN as a drug stash location. CC-1 was arrested while in possession of a backpack containing approximately six kilograms of cocaine - worth over \$100,000 - and a loaded gun. After CC-1's arrest, CC-1 and DE LA CRUZ discussed, in recorded conversations, selling the cocaine and sharing the profits from the sale.

DE LA CRUZ pleaded guilty to both counts with which she was charged: conspiracy to distribute cocaine and conspiracy to commit robbery. As a result of her plea, DE LA CRUZ faces a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years' imprisonment and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. She is scheduled to be sentenced on September 26, 2007 at 10:30am before United States District Judge SHIRLEY WOHL KRAM.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the FBI and the Internal Affairs Bureau of the NYPD.

Assistant United States Attorneys ELIE HONIG and MICHAEL Q. ENGLISH are in charge of the prosecution.

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