



# Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

Tampa                      Orlando  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 25, 2011  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

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## **NEBRASKA AVENUE ROBBER SENTENCED TO FORTY YEARS**

Tampa, FL - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that U.S. District Judge James Whittmore today sentenced Gregory Anthony Spain to forty years in federal prison for the robbery of a Family Dollar store, brandishing a gun during the robbery, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. The court also ordered Spain to forfeit the firearm and ammunition, which are traceable to proceeds of the offense.

Spain was found guilty by a federal jury on May 4, 2011.

According to testimony and court documents, on the night of August 25, 2010, Spain entered a Family Dollar store on Nebraska Avenue just before closing, wearing a ski mask and brandishing a revolver. He pointed the gun at a clerk and demanded money, and when she refused, pointed the gun at her and twice pulled the trigger. The weapon misfired. Spain then ripped a gold necklace off another employee and fled the store. Approximately sixteen hours later, Spain pawned the gold necklace at a pawn store, also on Nebraska Avenue, utilizing a false identity.

Seven days later, a Tampa Police Department (TPD) officer observed Spain riding a bicycle near Nebraska Avenue. The officer made a lawful traffic stop and noticed that Spain matched the physical description of the robbery suspect from the Family Dollar store.

During a safety pat-down, the officer felt what appeared to be the trigger guard of a gun in a sports-style backpack on Spain's back. Spain then fled. Following a chase, Spain was apprehended and a ski mask, gun from the Family Dollar store robbery, a pair of heavy dark pants, and a heavy dark shirt were discovered. Further investigation by detectives and the TPD forensics unit connected Spain to the Family Dollar store robbery and the pawning of the stolen gold necklace. At the time he was apprehended, Spain was a convicted felon.

This case was investigated by the Tampa Police Department and the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas N. Palermo.

It is another case prosecuted as part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" program - a nationwide, gun-violence reduction strategy led by ATF. United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill, along with Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent-in-Charge, ATF, is coordinating the Project Safe Neighborhoods effort here in the Middle District of Florida, in cooperation with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.