

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
402 East State Street, Room 430
Trenton, New Jersey 08608



Paul J. Fishman, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Contact the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

News on the Internet: News Releases, related documents and advisories are posted short-term at our website, along with links to our archived releases at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. ***Go to: <http://www.njusao.org/break.html>***

Assistant U.S. Attorney
SCOTT B. MCBRIDE
973-645-2708

alva0201.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb 1, 2010

Final Member of Jewelry Store “Smash-and-grab” Crew Pleads Guilty

(More)

Greg Reinert, PAO
Public Affairs Office

856-757-5233
973-645-2888

Breaking News (NJ) <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

TRENTON – The tenth and final member of a Newark-based “smash-and-grab” jewelry store robbery ring, which targeted stores in shopping malls in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Georgia, pleaded guilty today for his role in the conspiracy, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Jonathan Alvarado, 22, of Newark, pleaded guilty before U. S. District Chief Judge Garrett E. Brown, Jr., to one count of conspiracy to commit jewelry store robberies in violation of the Hobbs Act. Judge Brown continued the defendant’s detention without bail pending sentencing, which is scheduled for May 3.

According to a Superseding Indictment, the conspiracy involved the robbery or attempted robbery of at least eight jewelry stores in four states.

At his plea hearing, Alvarado admitted that from July 2003 until March 2004, he agreed with others to rob jewelry stores. Alvarado admitted his participation in the attempted robberies or robberies of four jewelry stores, which were located in the Garden State Mall in Paramus, the Rockaway Town Square Mall in Rockaway; the King of Prussia Court Mall in Upper Merion Township, Pa., and the Mall of Georgia in Buford, Ga. On April 19, 2005, Alvarado was convicted for a robbery of a jewelry store in Boca Raton, Fla., and served 38 months in federal prison as a result.

Alvarado was scheduled to testify in the 2008 trial of two of his co-conspirators, William Valentin and Hector Perez. On the day of his scheduled testimony, Oct. 8, 2008, Alvarado absconded. He remained a fugitive until he was arrested in Newark on April 20, 2009.

Alvarado’s nine co-conspirators, all of whom pleaded guilty to charges related to the conspiracy, were sentenced by Judge Brown to prison terms ranging from 102 months to 5 months.

The charge to which Alvarado pleaded guilty faces a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of the greatest of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss caused by his offense. In addition, Judge Brown will order Alvarado to make restitution to the victims of his crimes.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Brown will consult the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant’s criminal history, if any, and other factors. The Judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Kevin B. Cruise in Newark, Investigators with the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Wayne J. Forrest, and Investigators with the Union County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Theodore J. Romankow, for the investigation leading to the ten guilty pleas.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott B. McBride of the U.S. Attorney's Office Government Fraud Unit.

– end –

Defense Attorney: Ruth M. Liebesman, Esq. Fort Lee