

NEWS

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Final Member of “Route 35 Crew” Pleads Guilty,
Admits Role and Violent Acts During 14 Robberies

(More)

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NEWARK – The final principal member of the so-called “Route 35 Crew” pleaded guilty today to committing 11 armed bank robberies, a home invasion robbery and two other robberies between August 2006 and August 2007, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

Ruben Rosado, 31, of Rahway, pleaded guilty to three counts of a Superseding Indictment that was returned by a federal grand jury in November. Rosado pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to commit bank robbery, as well as one count of armed bank robbery and one count of possessing a firearm during the commission of a violent offense. Following the guilty plea, U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano set sentencing for March 16. Rosado remains in custody.

The defendant faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine on the counts in the Information. In addition, Judge Pisano must order that Rosado make restitution to the victims of his crimes.

During his plea today, Rosado admitted that he and his co-conspirators committed the robberies over a span of 14 months, during which more than \$288,000 was taken. In all but one of the robberies, firearms were brandished by Rosado or his co-conspirators. Among his admissions, Rosado said he beat an elderly courier during the Nov. 27, 2006, robbery of CardSmart, LLC. in Garwood, and pointed a gun at a baby and its mother during an August 2006 home invasion.

During the plea hearing today, Rosado admitted participation in the following robberies:

- August 15, 2006 home invasion robbery - Allentown, PA
- November 27, 2006 robbery of CardSmart, LLC - Garwood, NJ;
- December 27, 2006 robbery of Speedy Check Cashing - Linden, NJ;
- January 10, 2007 robbery of Rahway Savings Bank - Rahway, NJ;
- February 8, 2007 robbery of Wachovia Bank - Colonia, NJ;
- March 10, 2007 robbery of Unity Bank - Colonia, NJ;
- April 24, 2007 robbery of Unity Bank - Colonia, NJ;
- June 25, 2007 robbery of Bank of America - Iselin, NJ;
- July 20, 2007 robbery of Columbia Savings Bank - Edison, NJ;

- September 4, 2007 robbery of PNC Bank - Fords, NJ;
- September 15, 2007 robbery of Wachovia Bank - Metuchen, NJ;
- September 25, 2007 robbery of PNC Bank - East Brunswick, NJ;
- October 12, 2007 robbery of Bank of America - Edison, NJ; and
- November 10, 2007 robbery of Investors Savings Bank - Piscataway, NJ.

Pursuant to the terms of Rosado's plea, each of the 14 robberies counts as a separate offense under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines. Furthermore, Rosado's plea to possessing a firearm during the commission of a violent offense carries a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years in prison, to run consecutive to the sentence to be imposed for the armed bank robbery and conspiracy to commit bank robbery counts to which he pleaded guilty. According to the terms of the plea agreement, the parties agree that Rosado's extreme conduct during the robbery spree merits a more severe sentence than would otherwise be applicable under the Sentencing Guidelines. The government intends to seek at sentencing the maximum penalty applicable under the plea agreement, according to Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph Mack and Scott B. McBride.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Pisano will consult the advisory 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.

Rosado currently has five co-defendants, including Michael Green, Sandy Hart, Andre Billups, Brandon Thomas, and Andria Yarborough.

Green, 30, of Linden, pleaded guilty before Judge Pisano on Aug. 14, 2008, to a three-count Information charging him with one count of bank robbery, as well as one count of conspiracy to commit bank robbery and Hobbs Act robbery, and one count of possessing a firearm during the commission of a violent offense. During his plea hearing, Green admitted his participation in all the robberies listed above except the Allentown, Pa. robbery on Aug. 15, 2006. Green is being held without bail pending his sentencing.

Sandy Hart, 29, of Rahway, pleaded guilty on Aug. 11, 2008, before Judge Pisano to a one-count Information charging him with interstate travel in aid of racketeering. During the plea hearing, Hart admitted to committing the home invasion robbery in Allentown,

Pa. with Rosado and Billups. Hart was ordered detained and is being held without bail pending his sentencing.

Andre Billups, 24, of Rahway, pleaded guilty on Aug. 25, 2008, before Judge Pisano to a one-count Information charging him with conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery in relation to the Allentown home invasion robbery and the Cranford, NJ robbery of the CardSmart employee on November 27, 2006. Billups has been released on a \$100,000 bond secured by property pending his sentencing.

Brandon Thomas, 27, of Rahway, pleaded guilty on Nov. 17, 2008, before Judge Pisano to a one-count Information charging him with the receipt and possession of property stolen by Rosado and Green from the Bank of America in Edison, New Jersey on October 12, 2007. Thomas has been released on a \$100,000 personal recognizance bond pending sentencing.

Finally, Andria Yarborough, 24, of Roselle, pleaded guilty on May 20, 2008 before U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas to a one-count Information charging her with misprision of felony for lying to police and failing to report the November 27, 2006 robbery to police. Yarborough has been released on a \$50,000 unsecured bond pending sentencing.

Acting U.S. Attorney Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, for the investigation of the Route 35 Crew.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Mack of the U.S. Attorney's Securities and Health Care Fraud Unit, and Scott B. McBride of the U.S. Attorney's Government Fraud Unit.

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Defense Counsel for Rosado: Hal Haveson, Esq, Princeton