

For Immediate Release
October 5, 2011

**LARRY LUJAN TO RECEIVE LIFE SENTENCE AFTER CONVICTION ON
KIDNAPPING CHARGE RELATED TO DEATH OF 16-YEAR-OLD**

Teenaged Victim was Kidnapped, Tortured, Murdered, and Left
in Irrigation Ditch for Failing to Pay \$600 “Drug Tax”

LAS CRUCES – **Larry Lujan**, 33, will receive a life sentence for a kidnapping that resulted in the death of a 16-year-old, after a federal jury announced that it could not reach a unanimous decision on whether or not to impose the death penalty, announced United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales and Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice’s Department’s Criminal Division.

Lujan originally from Chamberino, N.M., was charged with the capital offense of kidnapping resulting in death. The guilt or innocence phase of the capital trial began on July 18, 2011, and concluded on Aug. 9, 2011, when the jury found Lujan guilty of kidnapping and fatally stabbing Dana Joseph “Joe” Grauke, Jr., after deliberating two-and-a-half hours. The “eligibility” stage of the penalty phase of the trial was conducted on Aug. 11, 2011, and the jury found Lujan eligible for a death sentence in less than two hours. The “selection” stage of the penalty phase began on Aug. 29, 2011, and concluded today when the jury said it was unable to reach a unanimous verdict on whether Lujan should be sentenced to death. Because the jury did not unanimously reach a decision on the death penalty, Lujan will receive a sentence of life of prison. The court has not yet scheduled a date for the imposition of the sentence.

According to the evidence and testimony presented at trial, Lujan targeted Grauke for attack because he failed to pay a \$600 “tax” to Lujan for selling marijuana in a neighborhood in San Antonio, Texas, that Lujan considered his “turf.” The evidence established that, on March 7, 2005, Lujan led a group of teenagers in breaking into Grauke’s home in San Antonio, where

they ransacked the residence; beat and tortured Grauke for several hours; and then transported the youth, who was bound, gagged and blindfolded, in the luggage compartment of a sports utility vehicle to Anthony, N.M. Approximately 36 hours after kidnapping Grauke, Lujan stabbed the teenager nine times in the back and cut his throat so deeply that his head was almost severed from his body. Grauke's body was found on March 20, 2005, in an irrigation ditch.

During the selection stage of the penalty phase of the trial, the jury heard testimony about Lujan's role in the stabbing deaths of a Chamberino couple in 1998. The double homicides also were related to a drug dealing dispute. Lujan faces first degree murder charges for that double homicide in a separate state case.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Dona Ana County Sheriff's Office and the San Antonio Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Maria Y. Armijo and Mark A. Saltman, and Trial Attorney Michael S. Warbel of the Criminal Division's Capital Case Unit.

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