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News Release

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced the guilty plea of Candice Rose Martinez, age 19, of Fairfax, Virginia, to conspiracy to commit bank robbery and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. Martinez pled guilty today before the Honorable Gerald Bruce Lee in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. In return for her plea, the government moved to dismiss four counts of bank robbery. Martinez faces a maximum sentence of life in prison when sentenced by Judge Lee on March 3, 2006.

Martinez, the so-called "Cellphone Bandit," admitted to conspiring with Dave Chatram Williams to rob Wachovia Bank branches in Vienna, Springfield, Manassas and Ashburn, Virginia. According to Martinez, the two of them composed a demand note using Williams personal computer and printer. The note threatened to shoot the tellers or someone next to them if the tellers failed to surrender the bank's money. The two picked the Wachovia Bank because Williams had previously been employed by Wachovia and was familiar with its internal operations.

In each case, Martinez entered the bank and presented the demand note to the teller. She then left with the bank's money and fled in an automobile driven by Williams, who was waiting outside. During the four robberies, Williams and Martinez remained in contact by cellular telephones. During the robbery of the Ashburn branch on November 4, 2005, Martinez brandished a .38 caliber revolver, which Williams had provided her. The total loss to Wachovia Bank in the four robberies was approximately \$48,620.

Martinez also agreed to waive her interest in any assets purchased with proceeds of the four bank robberies. Among these were a 1997 Acura Integra, a Sony large screen television, a 42" Sylvania Plasma flat screen television, two CD/DVD players, a four piece bedroom set, and numerous items of designer apparel and accessories, most of which still had the price tags attached, including 11 Louis Vuitton or Coach purses and bags, three pairs of jeans, four pairs of boots, two pairs of running shoes, five coats and jackets, seven tops and sweatshirts, two scarves, a gold tone belt and \$4,769.54 in cash and change.

Williams previously entered guilty pleas to the same charges before Judge Lee and is to be sentenced on February 24, 2006.

The case was investigated by the Fairfax County Police Department, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, the Prince William County Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Patricia Giles and Michael Rich.