



Department of Justice

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Northern District of Georgia

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MARIETTA MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ATTEMPTING TO HIRE AN UNDERCOVER HITMAN

Hernandez Wanted Hitman to Murder One Person, Permanently Injure Another

ATLANTA, GA - JUAN HERNANDEZ, 54, of Marietta, Georgia, was sentenced in federal court today relating to a plot to hire a hitman to commit murder.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "This defendant plotted for more than a year to kill the intended victim, and persistently tried to find someone who would do it. Fortunately, the undercover ATF agents prevented this defendant from harming anyone, and instead he is going to federal prison."

"Working proactively to disrupt violent crimes is just as important as aggressively investigating them after they occur, and murder-for-hire is as violent as it gets," said Special Agent in Charge Gregory Gant of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Atlanta Field Division. "Today's sentencing recognizes the very real threat that Hernandez posed to society. He plotted the unconscionable, put a price on a human life and for that, he is headed to federal prison."

HERNANDEZ was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release, and fined \$5,000. He will be turned over to immigration authorities for deportation proceedings at the end of his sentence. HERNANDEZ was convicted by a jury on a charge of using a facility of interstate commerce with the intent of murder on March 31, 2010, after a three-day trial.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges, and other evidence presented at trial: In April 2009, HERNANDEZ approached a confidential informant and asked whether the informant knew someone who could "dig out someone's eyes." HERNANDEZ offered the informant \$5,000 to commit the crime. After persistently badgering the informant to find a hitman, that informant instead chose to alert agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). An ATF special agent, acting in an undercover capacity, contacted HERNANDEZ about the murder-for-hire job in place of the informant.

On May 11, 2009, during a recorded telephone call with the undercover agent, HERNANDEZ said that he wanted the intended victim killed and that he would pay to get the job done. Over the next two weeks, HERNANDEZ negotiated to pay the undercover agent \$2,000 for the murder. ATF Agents also learned HERNANDEZ also sought to have a second unidentified person seriously maimed, and offered to pay an additional \$2,000 to have that done.

On May 27, 2009, HERNANDEZ met with two undercover agents to finalize the plan. During this meeting, HERNANDEZ showed agents where the intended victim lived, identified the intended victim by name, gave the agents a physical description of the intended victim and informed the agents of the intended victim's work schedule and travel route. HERNANDEZ also made a down payment for the murder with the agreement that the balance would be paid upon the agents showing proof that the intended victim was dead. At the conclusion of the meeting, HERNANDEZ was arrested.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Assistance on this case was provided by the City of Marietta Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorneys Phyllis Clerk, Tracia M. King and Zahra S. Karinshak prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.