



Department of Justice

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VIOLENT CARJACKER GOING TO FEDERAL PRISON

Vega Held Family and Baby at Gunpoint, Then Shot at Police Officers While Trying to Escape

ATLANTA, GA - EDUARDO VEGA, 30, of Marietta, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Orinda Evans to serve over 17 years in federal prison on charges of carjacking and using a firearm during a violent felony.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the sentence, "This man held a gun against the head of a two-year-old child while her grandmother watched in absolute terror. This crime was exceptionally violent and endangered the lives of many people, including civilians and law enforcement officers. Fortunately, an undercover officer was nearby, and the Fulton County Police showed extraordinary bravery to ultimately bring this family's nightmare to an end."

"Those criminals in Atlanta who think that they can commit violent crimes unchecked are sorely mistaken as federal, state and local law enforcement will be there," said Brock Nicholson, Acting Special Agent in Charge of ICE HSI for Georgia, North and South Carolina. "We hope that today's sentence brings some comfort and faith in our justice system to the victims who suffered at the hands of this heinous criminal."

VEGA was sentenced to 17 years and 6 months in federal prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. There is no parole in the federal system. He was convicted of the charges by a jury after a five-day trial in August 2010.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and evidence presented at trial: On June 1, 2007, in broad daylight on Fulton Industrial Blvd., VEGA approached a family in a sport utility vehicle who had pulled into the parking lot of a restaurant to eat lunch. VEGA quickly produced a gun in front of the family of six, and when the woman with the keys to the vehicle did not respond quickly enough to his demand for the vehicle, he began holding the gun to a 2-year old girl's head while continuing to demand the car from the family.

After VEGA took control of the SUV, he started to drive out of the parking lot, but an undercover Atlanta Police Detective, who observed the crime in progress, and ran out of the restaurant attempting to call for help on a police radio. VEGA saw the officer and shot at him while speeding away from the scene. Fulton County Police responded almost immediately and quickly located the speeding car. VEGA led Fulton County Police on a high speed chase on Fulton Industrial Blvd., until he ran into a tractor-trailer, wrecking the stolen car. VEGA then jumped out of the car and began firing at the police officers before he escaped into the woods. As police were beginning the search, VEGA was able to contact his girlfriend who worked nearby. The girlfriend assisted VEGA in temporarily escaping from police. VEGA was spotted and arrested later that day at a convenience store near his home in Marietta. The girlfriend was not charged. Two of the victims and two police officers immediately identified VEGA from a photo lineup.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) along with significant assistance from the Fulton County Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Katherine Monahan Hoffer 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.justice.gov/usao/gan.