



U. S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of Louisiana

For Immediate Release
February 3, 2011

www.justice.gov/usao/law

Stephanie A. Finley
United States Attorney
(337) 262-6618
mona.hardwick@usdoj.gov

COLOMBIAN CITIZEN SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

Defendant receives 235 months in prison

Lake Charles, La.: Carlos A. Hurtado-Valois, 31, a citizen of Colombia, was sentenced today to 235 months in prison and five years supervised release following imprisonment, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced. As a condition of his supervised release, Hurtado-Valois was also ordered to assist in his deportation. Re-entry into the United States will be a violation of his supervised release. The sentence was imposed by U. S. District Judge Patricia Minaldi.

Hurtado-Valois was convicted after a two-day trial last November of conspiracy to import a controlled substance, importation of a controlled substance, possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance and illegal entry of an alien. Hurtado-Valois was indicted, along with his co-defendant, Felipe Gonzalez-Valencia in February 2010. In an attempt to import cocaine into the United States, both defendants boarded a vessel bound for the U.S. After five days at sea, the "Nero" entered into the Lake Charles port area. Hurtado-Valois and Gonzalez-Valencia lowered approximately eight large duffel bags containing cocaine into the water and went into the water themselves to push the cocaine bundles to shore. Due to the frigid temperature, the defendants decided to hide the cocaine in the marshy area and called 911 to be rescued from the cold. Subsequently, law enforcement officers searched the recovery area and recovered 167.5 kilograms of pure cocaine.

Gonzalez-Valencia pleaded guilty in August 2010 to conspiracy to import a controlled substance, and was sentenced in November 2010 to 210 months imprisonment and five years supervised release. As a condition of his supervised release, Gonzalez-Valencia was also ordered to assist in his deportation. Re-entry into the United States will be a violation of his supervised release.

United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley stated, "The U.S. Attorney's Office, along with our law enforcement partners, will continue to vigorously investigate, prosecute and seek serious and long sentences for anyone who engages in large-scale trafficking of cocaine."

Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in New Orleans, Raymond R. Parmer, Jr., stated, "The smuggling of illegal drugs into the United States is a very serious crime and those involved in such criminal enterprises will never receive a reprieve from law enforcement. In our efforts to keep drugs off the streets of Lake Charles, we will continue working with our law enforcement partners and using all of our resources to identify and dismantle drug trafficking and money laundering organizations."

This case was investigated by Department of Homeland Security/Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency and the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James T. McManus.

#