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Three Philadelphia Area Men Sentenced for Hobbs Act Robbery and Murder of a Police Officer

Richard S. Hartunian, United States Attorney, Northern District of New York, announced today that MARION PEGESE, age 38, ROBERT WARD, age 32, and TOUSSAINT DAVIS, age 42, all of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania were sentenced in U.S. District Court in Syracuse, New York following their convictions for conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robberies and the murder of New Hartford, New York Police Officer Joseph Corr. The sentencings today followed a multi-year investigation by numerous local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Chief District Court Judge Norman A. Mordue imposed life sentences on each defendant for their participation in the murder of Officer Corr following their escape of the armed robbery of Lennon's W.B. Wilcox Jewelers in New Hartford, N.Y. on February 27, 2006. Judge Mordue also imposed twenty year sentences on each defendant following their convictions for Conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robberies of the Ballew Jewelers in Freehold, New Jersey on August 26, 2005 and the February 27, 2006 robbery of Lennon's W.B. Wilcox Jewelry store. The robbery sentences were ordered to run concurrent to the life sentence imposed for the murder of Officer Corr. The

court also imposed an order of restitution on each defendant in the amount of \$1,178,420, representing the amount of stolen jewelry never recovered from the Ballew Jewelers., Lennon's Jewelers and victim costs.

On November 5, 2010, a U.S. District Court jury in Syracuse convicted Pegese, Ward and Davis of all counts of a three count indictment charging them with conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act Robberies in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a); Hobbs Act Robbery in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a) and 18 U.S.C. § 2 and Murder in Furtherance of a Crime of Violence in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)(1). The jury's conviction followed a three week trial where the government presented testimony from 56 witnesses and entered more than 150 exhibits into evidence.

The evidence revealed that on August 26, 2005, Pegese, Ward, Davis and another un-indicted co-conspirator committed a gun-point robbery of Ballew Jeweler's in Freehold, New Jersey. At the time the defendants were unaware that the Ballew Jewelers had a video surveillance system which recorded the robbery. After binding the hands and feet of four store clerks, the defendants were able to steal diamond jewelry and Rolex watches valued at approximately \$1.8 million dollars. None of the jewelry or watches have ever been recovered.

Approximately six months later, defendants Ward and Davis contacted the Rolex watch company customer service center seeking out information on the locations of Rolex dealers in Upstate New York. They were provided with the name of the W.B. Wilcox Jewelers in New Hartford, New York. Shortly before closing time on February 27, 2006, Pegese, Ward, Davis and an un-indicted co-conspirator, Walter Richardson, entered Lennon's Jewelers armed and wearing masks. They handcuffed five store employees but not before one clerk in a rear room was able to make a 911 call. As New Hartford Police responded, Richardson and Davis fled in a blue Buick while Pegese and Ward escaped, undetected, in a second auto. As New Hartford Police Officer

Joseph Corr pursued Ricahrdson and Davis during a five mile high speed chase, they fired shots back at his police vehicle. The chase came to an end when Richardson failed to negotiate a high speed turn. His vehicle struck an embankment, became airborne and crashed into a gas pump. Uninjured, both fled on foot. As responding officers caught up to Davis and attempted to take him into custody, Walter Richardson fired a single gunshot at Officer Corr, fatally wounding him. Richardson was able to continue his escape through a wooded area and at gunpoint ordered a tow truck operator to drive him to Philadelphia.

The following morning, February 28, 2006, United States Marshals and the local fugitive task force located Richardson in Chester, Pa. and attempted to negotiate his surrender. Richardson instead came out of the building where he was hiding firing shots at the officers. They returned fire killing Richardson. His firearm was later ballistically matched to the projectile that killed Officer Corr. Pegese and Robert Ward, were initially able to successfully return undetected to Philadelphia. However, testimony from three New Hartford citizens and extensive cell phone and cell site evidence recovered by investigators revealed Ward and Pegese as the remaining two robbers.

The case was investigated by the New Hartford Police Department, the Oneida County Sheriff's Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Utica Police Department, New York State Police, Pennsylvania State Police, the Philadelphia Police Department, and the Monmouth County (New Jersey) Prosecutor's Office and Oneida County (New York) District Attorney's Office.

The case was prosecuted by Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney John G. Duncan and Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard R. Southwick. For further information contact Executive AUSA John G. Duncan at 315-448-0672.