



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian
Northern District of New York**

October 15, 2012

[Syracuse, New York]

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ny>

NINTH GUILTY PLEA IN BRICKTOWN GANG RICO CONSPIRACY

RICHARD S. HARTUNIAN, United States Attorney, Northern District of New York, announces that **MIGUEL RUSSO**, **age 23**, of Syracuse, pled guilty in U.S. District Court in Syracuse to an indictment which charged him and 13 others with conspiring to exploit their membership in the Bricktown Gang to engage in a pattern of racketeering activity which included multiple acts of murder, drug trafficking, and robbery. Eight other defendants have already pled guilty and the charges against 5 others remain pending.¹

As part of his plea, **RUSSO** admitted that the Bricktown Gang has operated within the City of Syracuse from at least 2000 through the present and that members of the Bricktown Gang: (1) maintain a specific geographic territory within the City of Syracuse in which only gang members can sell crack cocaine, cocaine and marijuana; (2) protect that exclusive crack distribution territory with violence if necessary; (3) obtain drugs from suppliers in New York City and elsewhere; (4) project a very violent attitude and respond to violence with violence in order to preserve their stature in the gang community; (5) on occasion use hand signs, wear blue colored bandanas and have tattoos, all of which are intended to signify their gang membership; (6) use criteria such as willingness to use violence, ability to sell drugs, and familial connections to determine membership; and (7) routinely carry and use firearms in connection with their gang activity.

RUSSO also admitted as part of his plea that he possessed a handgun in connection with a shooting in Syracuse and participated in at least 3 crack cocaine sales to a cooperating informant.

At sentencing, **RUSSO** faces up to life imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and up to three years of supervised release following any period of incarceration.

This prosecution resulted from a long-term investigation conducted by the Syracuse Gang Violence Task Force, which is comprised of agents and detectives from the following agencies: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (Syracuse Office),

¹ The Indictment contains mere accusations and all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law either by way of a guilty plea or verdict of guilty.

the Syracuse Police Department, the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department, the New York State Troopers, and the United States Marshals Service. The Onondaga County District Attorney's Office also assisted in the investigation.

Further questions or inquiries may be directed to Assistant U.S. Attorney, John M. Katko, who is handling the case, at (315) 448-0672.

END OF NEWS RELEASE
