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Southern District of New York*

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**DIAMOND DISTRICT JEWELER CONVICTED**  
**OF ORDERING THE MURDER OF A**  
**FEMALE DRUG COURIER**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that a federal jury found JOEL SPIGELMAN, a/k/a "Joe," a/k/a "Judas," guilty late yesterday of ordering the murder of a female drug courier in March 1999.

The jury convicted SPIGELMAN of one count of intentional murder, one count of felony murder in aid of racketeering, one count of murder committed with a firearm, and one count of narcotics trafficking. United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN presided over the nine-day trial. SPIGELMAN faces a mandatory sentence of life in prison. According to the evidence at trial:

SPIGELMAN operated a jewelry business on 47<sup>th</sup> Street in the Diamond District in Manhattan for many years. From that office, SPIGELMAN sold millions of dollars of stolen jewelry and kilogram quantities of cocaine. SPIGELMAN obtained some of the stolen jewelry and cocaine from South American robbery crews who committed violent armed robberies and sold the proceeds of those robberies to SPIGELMAN.

SPIGELMAN also gave tips to violent armed robbery crews on targets to be robbed, providing the names and addresses of his own jewelry and drug customers in return for a share of whatever was stolen, often including the jewelry that he had sold to those customers. Examples of this included robberies of jewelry customers in both New Jersey and Connecticut; on one occasion, a family was tied up and tortured.

In March 1999, SPIGELMAN provided a tip to a Colombian robbery crew that he was going to be receiving 50 to 60 kilograms of cocaine at his apartment in Queens from a female Colombian courier, who was supposed to have another 150 kilograms for other customers in the trunk of her car. SPIGELMAN gave this tip to the robbers on the explicit condition that if they committed the robbery of the 150 kilos, they would have to kill the courier so that the robbery could not be traced back to him.

On March 17, 1999, the robbery was committed as planned and, on SPIGELMAN's order, ALEX RESTREPO executed the woman with a single gunshot to the back of the head. The woman's body was dumped in Forest Park in Queens. She has never been identified. RESTREPO was previously prosecuted by this Office and convicted of the killing of former New York City Police Officer DONALD PAGANI, among other crimes, after a jury trial before Judge SCHEINDLIN in 2002, and is currently serving a life sentence.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in connection with the investigation, arrest and prosecution of SPIGELMAN.

Assistant United States Attorneys HELEN V. CANTWELL and MARISSA MOLÉ are in charge of the prosecution.

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