



*United States Attorney
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**LEADER OF INTERNATIONAL MONEY LAUNDERING ORGANIZATION
SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT
TO NINE YEARS IN PRISON**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that DAVID EDUARDO HELMUT MURCIA GUZMÁN, the founder of the Colombian marketing giant D.M.G. Group ("DMG"), was sentenced today to nine years in prison for his participation in a scheme to launder millions of dollars' worth of illicit funds, including narcotics proceeds, through DMG. MURCIA GUZMÁN was sentenced in Manhattan federal court by U.S. District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY. Judge PAULEY previously ordered GUZMAN to forfeit ten properties located in , and \$7 million.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "MURCIA GUZMÁN wove an intricate web of deception across continents to disguise his dirty drug money and support his lavish lifestyle. But his web has been untangled and his lifestyle dramatically curtailed by this sentence."

According to the Superseding Indictment to which MURCIA GUZMÁN pled guilty, and statements made in court:

The DMG Organization

DAVID EDUARDO HELMUT MURCIA GUZMÁN created DMG in 2003 as a vehicle for a multi-level marketing scheme, through which customers could buy pre-paid debit cards. DMG sold these pre-paid debit cards to customers in Latin America, who could use them to purchase electronics and other items at retail stores operated by DMG. By 2008, DMG had approximately 400,000 customers. DMG ceased its operations by January 2009.

The Money Laundering Conspiracy

MURCIA GUZMÁN and five co-defendants -- employees and affiliates of DMG -- laundered narcotics proceeds through DMG and

DMG's affiliated companies. They used the Colombian Black Market Peso Exchange, an informal value transfer system commonly used to launder illicitly-obtained dollars in the United States, in exchange for pesos taken in for "legitimate" purchases in Colombia.

For example, in the fall of 2007, MURCIA GUZMÁN and co-defendant MARGARITA LEONOR PABON CASTRO approached another individual in Colombia and said that they had cash -- apparently in U.S. dollars -- that they could not deposit into the Colombian banking system. They asked the individual to set up an account in the United States where these funds could be deposited. Thereafter, the individual opened an account at Merrill Lynch in the United States, under the name "Blackstone International Development" (the "Blackstone Account"). Neither MURCIA GUZMÁN nor PABON CASTRO were listed as owners of the Blackstone Account.

In March 2008, MURCIA GUZMÁN and PABON CASTRO told the same individual that they had provided \$2.2 million worth of Colombian Pesos to co-defendant GERMAN ENRIQUE SERRANO-REYES in Colombia, and, in exchange, SERRANO-REYES had caused the nearly \$2.2 million to be wired into the Blackstone Account through eighteen separate wire transfers. In May 2008, the U.S. Government seized about \$2.2 million from the Blackstone Account pursuant to a court order. When MURCIA GUZMÁN was informed of the seizure of the Blackstone Account, he told the individual who set it up that he should not attempt to retrieve its contents, and should not, under any circumstances inform the authorities of MURCIA GUZMÁN's or PABON CASTRO's interest in the Blackstone Account.

Co-defendant WILLIAM SUÁREZ-SUÁREZ headed DMG's Colombian security and cash transportation operations, including overseeing the delivery of cash to money laundering agents and attempts to pay bribes to Colombian officials. Co-defendant LUIS FERNANDO CEDIEL ROZO supervised wire transfers and bulk cash transfers of millions of dollars of DMG money out of Colombia through the Black Market Peso Exchange. Co-defendant SANTIAGO BARANCHUK-RUEDA received black market transfers of DMG money, including transfers overseen by CEDIEL ROZO, to U.S. bank and

On November 23, 2010, MURCIA GUZMÁN pled guilty to conspiracy to launder the proceeds of narcotics trafficking. SUÁREZ-SUÁREZ, PABON CASTRO, CEDIEL ROZO, BARANCHUK-RUEDA, and SERRANO-REYES have each previously pled guilty to the same charge. On January 26, 2011, SERRANO-REYES was sentenced to a period of time already served.

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In addition to the prison term, Judge PAULEY sentenced MURCIA GUZMÁN, 30, of Colombia, to three years of supervised release. MURCIA GUZMÁN was also ordered to pay a \$100 special assessment and forfeit \$7 million and all right, title, and

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force -- which is comprised of agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, and the New York State Police -- DEA's Bogota Country Office, DEA's Caracas Country Office, DEA's Caribbean Division, U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and ICE's Caracas Country Office. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs for their ongoing assistance in the investigation.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit, with the assistance of the Asset Forfeiture Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys BENJAMIN A. NAFTALIS, TELEMACHUS P. KASULIS, and MICHAEL D. LOCKARD are in charge of the prosecution.

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