



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**UNITED STATES MILITARY PILOT SENTENCED TO OVER 17 YEARS
FOR IMPORTING ECSTASY ON UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that Captain FRANKLIN RODRIGUEZ of the United States Air National Guard was sentenced today to 17 ½ years (210 months) in prison by United States District Judge JOHN G. KOELTL on federal narcotics charges.

RODRIGUEZ, 36, and his co-defendant Master Sergeant JOHN FONG, also of the United States Air National Guard, both pleaded guilty on May 19, 2006, to one count of conspiring to import the drug commonly known as Ecstasy into the United States, and one count of conspiring to possess and distribute Ecstasy. The charges were the result of an international investigation into importation of Ecstasy on military aircraft and the distribution of Ecstasy in the United States. As set forth in the Indictment, on April 12, 2005, RODRIGUEZ and FONG flew from Germany to Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, aboard a United States Air Force C-5A "Galaxy" cargo aircraft on which they had hidden more than 200,000 Ecstasy pills. RODRIGUEZ also stored Ecstasy pills and approximately \$725,000 in cash in his apartment in the Bronx, New York, and RODRIGUEZ and FONG stored approximately 60,000 Ecstasy pills in an automobile in Tampa, Florida.

FONG is scheduled to be sentenced on November 17, 2006, at 10:00 a.m., before Judge KOELTL.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the members of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force. Mr. GARCIA also thanked Brigadier General Dana Demand and his staff at Stewart Air National Guard Base, the United States Air Force, Office of Special Investigations, and the United States Department of Defense, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, for their assistance.

Assistant United States Attorneys SCOTT L. MARRAH and DANIEL L. STEIN are in charge of the prosecutions.

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