



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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HITMAN CONVICTED ON FEDERAL MURDER CHARGES

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ALFRED SOLER, a/k/a "Manuel Soler," a/k/a "Alfredo Soler," was found guilty this morning of murder, after only two hours of jury deliberation following a two-week trial before United States District Judge RICHARD J. HOLWELL. SOLER, 57, was convicted of three counts of murder in connection with the July 2, 1998 shooting and killing of JOSE MARTINEZ in the Bronx. According to the evidence at trial:

In the summer of July 1998, SOLER was introduced to JUNIOR CUSTODIOS, a/k/a "Junior Montaz," a/k/a "Junior Montez," a/k/a "Guancho Trompeta," who hired SOLER to kill MARTINEZ. CUSTODIOS and MARTINEZ had previously worked together robbing drug dealers in Manhattan and the Bronx of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine, but a dispute arose between them concerning the proceeds of some drug robberies. MARTINEZ attempted to have CUSTODIOS shot and killed, but CUSTODIOS survived the shooting. CUSTODIOS thereafter hired SOLER to kill MARTINEZ. (CUSTODIOS is charged in the Indictment with SOLER but remains a fugitive.)

On July 2, 1998, SOLER and another individual ("CC-1") went inside the parking garage on Freeman Street in the Bronx, which MARTINEZ operated, to confront MARTINEZ. SOLER and CC-1 both shot MARTINEZ, who died from the 6 gunshot wounds to the head, chest, and body. In 2004, ALCIBIADES MERCADO-GARCIA, a/k/a "Angel Guzman-Rodriguez" -- who had participated in the murder and, among other things, introduced CUSTODIOS to SOLER -- agreed to plead guilty and cooperate with the Government. Thereafter, an eyewitness to the murder identified SOLER from a series of photographs.

SOLER was convicted of one count of killing of a person while engaged in a drug conspiracy; one count of conspiring to

commit murder-for-hire; and one count of causing the death of another through the use of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime. Each count of conviction carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and the first count carries a mandatory minimum sentence of twenty years' imprisonment.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the New York City Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorneys JILLIAN B. BERMAN and DAVID LEIBOWITZ are in charge of the prosecution.

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