



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
YUSILL SCRIBNER,  
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,  
JANICE OH  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**YONKERS MAN CONVICTED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT OF  
ARMED ROBBERY, NARCOTICS DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY,  
AUTO THEFT, AND OTHER CRIMES**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that DIN CELAJ was convicted today, after a two-week jury trial, of various crimes including multiple robbery and firearms offenses, a marijuana distribution conspiracy, and offenses relating to the theft of luxury cars. According to documents filed in this case, as well as the evidence presented at trial before United States District Judge ROBERT P. PATTERSON:

DIN CELAJ, 25, of Yonkers, New York, led a crew of robbers who posed as New York City Police Department officers and targeted individuals whom they believed to be drug dealers. CELAJ and others approached individuals in their homes, claiming to be police and asking for permission to enter. Once inside, the crew held the targets at gunpoint while taking any drugs or money found in the home. CELAJ and the crew committed several successful robberies and burglaries netting more than \$1 million in cash and marijuana. CELAJ also planned and attempted additional robberies.

CELAJ and his crew were able to successfully impersonate the police, in part, because CELAJ recruited DARREN MOONAN, an actual New York City Police Officer based in Queens, to rob suspected drug dealers with him. MOONAN previously pleaded guilty to multiple robbery, narcotics and firearms offenses, and is awaiting sentencing.

In addition to the home robbery offenses, CELAJ was convicted for stealing and selling more than 20 luxury cars, including Lexus and Mercedes vehicles. He also took a car to allow a co-conspirator to fraudulently report it as stolen to an insurance company, which led to the mail fraud charge.

CELAJ was convicted on one count of robbery conspiracy,

three counts of robbery, three counts of possessing firearms in furtherance of robbery, one count of marijuana distribution conspiracy, one count of conspiracy to transport vehicles in interstate commerce, one count of transporting vehicles in interstate commerce, and one count of mail fraud conspiracy. The defendant was acquitted of one robbery and one firearms charge.

CELAJ faces a total maximum sentence of life and a mandatory minimum sentence of at least 50 years in prison at sentencing, currently scheduled for January 20, 2010, at 4:00 p.m. before Judge PATTERSON. The defendant also faces a maximum fine of the greatest of \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss from the offense on each charge, except for the marijuana distribution conspiracy charge, which carries a maximum fine of \$1 million.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's New York Field Office, which led the investigation. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the New York City Police Department and the Bronx District Attorney's Office for their assistance in the investigation and prosecution of this case.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Organized Crime Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys JOHN T. ZACH and ARLO DEVLIN-BROWN are in charge of the prosecution.

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