



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2007**

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

**LEADER OF INTERNATIONAL HEROIN ORGANIZATION
SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that ADRIANO MEJIA -- a leader of an international heroin organization based in the Dominican Republic and the Bronx -- was sentenced to 360 months in prison for his role in a conspiracy involving the distribution of over 1,500 kilograms of heroin, laundering hundreds of thousands of dollars in drug proceeds, and using firearms to protect the narcotics enterprise. The sentence was imposed by United States District Judge ALVIN K. HELLERSTEIN in Manhattan federal court today.

The sentence follows MEJIA's May 7, 2007, plea to a superseding Information charging him with the above conspiracy as well as one count of possession of heroin with intent to distribute. According to the Information and documents and statements on the record of this case:

MEJIA was one of the leaders of a heroin organization based in the Dominican Republic and the Bronx, New York. During the course of the conspiracy, from approximately 2001 through August 2005, the organization earned millions of dollars and distributed over 1,500 kilograms of heroin in the New York City area. MEJIA and other leaders in the organization recruited over 100 workers to manufacture heroin for retail sale in multiple heroin mills. Members of the organization worked 15-hour days, 7 days a week, inside mills located in multi-story houses in residential communities of the Bronx, New York. The leaders, managers and workers of each mill slept in the homes where they manufactured and packaged heroin. The workers earned about \$1,000 per week, and the managers about \$2,500. The organization moved mills from one house to another, and often operated several heroin mills at the same time. MEJIA and the other leaders kept

multiple loaded weapons inside each heroin mill to protect the heroin and drug proceeds, and they used cameras and other anti-surveillance mechanisms to avoid being caught.

On August 15, 2005, one mill, located at 3166 Fenton Avenue in the Bronx, was raided by New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force officers working with members of the NYPD's Organized Crime Investigation Division Money Laundering Unit. (The Strike Force includes members from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York City Police Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Internal Revenue Service, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the New York State Police.) Inside the house, officers seized more than 19 kilograms of heroin, over 150,000 vials of heroin, over \$320,000 in cash, 150 grinders used to manufacture heroin for retail sale, two money counting machines, a bullet-resistant vest, seven firearms, and ammunition. Officers also found and arrested 13 members of the criminal organization who were manufacturing and packaging heroin in the mill at the time of the raid. Six other members, including MEJIA, who was the main leader of this heroin mill, were arrested subsequently.

Other members of the heroin conspiracy have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 48 months to 210 months.

Mr. GARCIA praised the collective work of the Strike Force, and the individual performance of the DEA, NYPD, IRS, ICE, FBI, NYSP, and OCID Money Laundering Unit in the investigation of this case.

Assistant United States Attorneys REED MICHAEL BRODSKY and MARISSA MOLÉ are in charge of the prosecution.

07-228

###