

Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.
Western District of New York

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CONTACT: BARBARA BURNS
PHONE: (716) 843-5817
FAX: (716) 551-3051

10th STREET GANG MEMBER SENTENCED

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Renel Velazquez, 27, of Buffalo, New York, who was convicted of RICO Conspiracy, was sentenced to a term of 78 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph M. Tripi, who handled the case, stated that the defendant had been a member of the 10th Street Gang when he participated in a violent assault and robbery on February 1, 2008. The defendant also sold marijuana on the West Side of Buffalo, in the territory controlled by the 10th Street Gang, and also permitted other 10th Street Gang members to store cocaine, firearms, and ammunition inside his apartment for use as a part of the gang's illegal activities.

On February 1, 2008, the defendant and other 10th Street Gang members and associates developed a plan to rob an individual, identified as victim C.M., of United States currency and other items of value. On February 1, 2008, the defendant and others went to the victim's apartment, entered, and waited for the victim to arrive home. During the time the defendant waited for the victim to arrive, the defendant maintained cellular telephone communication with a female who was in the presence of victim C.M. The female kept the defendant apprised of when victim C.M. would be returning home. When victim C.M. returned home, the defendant and other 10th Street gang associates, who were waiting inside the victim's residence, punched, choked and kicked the victim repeatedly. The defendant struck the victim repeatedly in the head and back with a hammer, which caused bodily injury to victim. While the victim was laying on the ground, the defendant and his accomplices stripped the victim of his clothing, and took the victim's leather jacket, cellular phone, and over \$600 U.S. currency. The defendant later split the proceeds from the robbery with his 10th Street gang associates. The victim suffered injuries to his head, face, and vertebrae which required admission into the Erie County Medical Center.

The conviction was the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the FBI Safe Streets Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota, New York State Police under the direction of Major Christopher Cummings, the Buffalo

Police Department under the direction of Commissioner Daniel Derenda and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives under the direction of Frank Christiano

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