

Department of Justice

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 05, 2012
www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyw

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

LAST DEFENDANT PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG CONSPIRACY; RINGLEADER SENTENCED

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Reynaldo Velez, 36, of Rochester, N.Y., who was convicted of drug conspiracy, possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking, and money laundering conspiracy, was sentenced to 465 months in prison by U.S. District Court Judge Charles J. Siragusa.

In addition, Domingo Morales Martinez, of Puerto Rico, pleaded guilty before Judge Siragusa to drug conspiracy and money laundering conspiracy. The drug conspiracy carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, a fine of \$4,000,000 or both and the money laundering charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of \$500,000 or both. Velez and Martinez were two of a total of 34 defendants who had been charged in connection with this violent narcotics trafficking and money laundering conspiracy. With Martinez's plea, all 34 have now been convicted.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jennifer Noto, who is handling the case, stated that Velez and Martinez participated in a large, armed narcotics trafficking organization responsible for the receipt and distribution of multiple kilograms of cocaine and heroin in the Rochester area between January 2007 and October 2008. Velez was a leader in the organization that sent and received packages of cocaine via the U.S. Mail from Puerto Rico to Rochester. Proceeds from drug sales were sent back to Puerto Rico to purchase more cocaine.

Velez and other members of the conspiracy were involved in two shootings in Rochester during 2007. One occurred on April 20, 2007, on Rohr Street, the second on Clifford Avenue on July 24, 2007, which left one person paralyzed.

“Today’s conviction and sentencing brings to a close the activities of a dangerous, international organization involved in the dealing of illegal narcotics on the streets of our community,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “The successful investigation and prosecution involved multiple levels of law enforcement on the federal, state and local levels which will continue to work in partnership to stem the flow of drugs into our neighborhoods.”

The sentencing and conviction are the culmination of a multi-agency investigation under the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HITA) and Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) initiatives. Federal and State law enforcement agencies, including Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearm and Explosives, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Scott Heagney, Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division, Postal Inspectors of the United States Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector-in-Charge Robert Bethel, and officers from the Greater Rochester Area Narcotics Enforcement Team, under the direction of Lt. Joseph Morabito, worked in concert with the United States Attorney's Office in the year long investigation.

Martinez will be sentenced on April 4, 2012, at 2:45 p.m. EST, in Rochester, N.Y., before Judge Siragusa.

###