



Department of Justice

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SIX CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY, HOSTAGE TAKING, GUN CRIMES

COLUMBUS – A federal grand jury has indicted six illegal aliens in a 14-count indictment alleging conspiracy, hostage taking and gun crimes, for abducting a woman and her two-year old daughter in Columbus on December 14 and 15, 2009.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Brian Moskowitz, special agent in charge of the Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Michigan and Ohio, Christopher Sadowski, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien, and Columbus Police Chief Walter Distelzweig, announced the indictment today.

The indictment charges each of the six defendants with one count of conspiracy to commit hostage taking, hostage taking, six counts of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence, and six counts of possession of a firearm by an illegal alien.

Named in the indictment are:

- * Martin Valdez Zavala, 21, a Mexican national,
- * Matias Gallegos-Villagomez, 24, a Mexican national,
- * Augustin Galvin-Garcia, aka Pedro Rodriguez Solano, 40, a Mexican national,
- * Guadalupe Villa-Rodriguez, 30, a Mexican national,
- * Mauricio Martinez-Diaz, 28, a Salvadoran national,
- * Jorge Toledo-Corzo, 28, a Mexican national.

All six are in custody.

Conspiracy to commit hostage taking and hostage taking are punishable by up to life imprisonment. Each count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence is punishable by five years imprisonment consecutive to any other time served. Each count of possession of a firearm by an illegal alien is punishable by up to ten years imprisonment.

The indictment alleges that the defendants kidnapped the wife and child of a Columbus man in December 2009 in an attempt to recover an alleged drug debt. Columbus Police became aware of the plot and made a vehicle stop on two cars, which contained the defendants, leaving a residence where the mother and child were being held.

Columbus-based HSI agents were contacted by Columbus Police to conduct a federal investigation. HSI and ATF agents obtained witness testimony, physical and DNA evidence, and identified the suspects as illegal aliens, which led to the federal indictment. Following the current criminal charges, the defendants will also be placed in removal proceedings.

"HSI will continue to work with its local and federal partners to remove dangerous illegal aliens from our communities," said Brian Moskowitz, special agent in charge of the Office of

Homeland Security Investigations in Michigan and Ohio. "These charges illustrate that commitment."

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation by ICE and ATF agents and Columbus Police officers, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kevin Kelley and Michael Hunter, who are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an accusation. Defendants should be presumed innocent unless convicted in court.

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