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WIFE SENTENCED TO 11 MONTHS FOR THWARTED KIDNAP PLOT

PHILADELPHIA - Yudeka Valdez, 35, of Philadelphia, was sentenced today to 11 months in prison for Hobbs Act extortion in connection with a thwarted plot to stage the kidnapping of herself and her husband for profit, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. Valdez sought to enlist two men, who turned out to be an undercover DEA agent and a DEA informant, in a scheme to extort funds from husband, whom she claimed was a drug dealer, because she felt that he was being too stingy with money for her living expenses.

In her meetings with the two men, Valdez discussed her dissatisfaction with her husband, including his failure to provide her with enough money to meet the monthly payments on her Mercedes automobile. Valdez's plan called for the two men to kidnap her husband, to pretend to kidnap her, and to agree to let them go only in return for a substantial payment by the husband. The government was aware of the plot from the early stages and there was never a danger of it being carried out. Valdez was arrested November 7, 2008, shortly after providing funds to her purported conspirators to be used to carry out the extortion. On January 6, 2011, Valdez pleaded guilty to attempted interference with commerce by extortion.

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge J. Curtis Joyner ordered a \$500 fine, a \$100 special assessment and three years of supervised release.

The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Paul G. Shapiro.

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