



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **GRAND JURY INDICTS CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS IN TWO JEWELRY THEFT CONSPIRACIES**

**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that four California residents were indicted by a federal grand jury today in two separate cases for participating in jewelry theft conspiracies that each included the armed robbery of a traveling salesman.

In each case, Graves said, the defendants allegedly followed a traveling salesman who was conducting business in the metropolitan area in order to confront him and forcibly steal merchandise -- approximately \$750,000 worth of jewelry and precious stones in one robbery, and nearly \$660,000 worth of jewelry and precious stones in the second robbery.

\* **Manuel Rojas Gutierrez**, 23, and **Jimmy A. Morales**, 22, both of California, were charged in a two-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that **Gutierrez** and **Morales** participated in a robbery conspiracy on July 15, 2003. According to the indictment, **Gutierrez** and **Morales** (as well as another person unknown to the grand jury) traveled to the Kansas City metropolitan area in order to follow and rob a jewelry salesman. They allegedly drove to Overland Park, Kan., on that day in order to follow a jewelry sales representative employed by Precision Set of Dallas, Texas, who was conducting business at Tivol Jewelry Store, 4712 West 119<sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, Kan.

The indictment alleges that the defendants followed the jewelry salesman by car as he drove to Kansas City International Airport. They allegedly confronted the salesman at a Conoco gas station at 425 West Paris Street, Kansas City, and took approximately \$750,000 worth of jewelry and precious stones.

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Gutierrez** and **Morales** (as well as

another person unknown to the grand jury) used a dangerous weapon in the commission of the offense alleged in Count One.

\* **Edwin Ricardo Perdomo**, also known as Jose Benavides, 23, and **Catalina Rosario Palacios**, 37, both of California, were charged with robbery conspiracy in a single-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City.

The indictment alleges that **Perdomo** (and other persons unknown) traveled to the Kansas City metropolitan area on March 1, 2003, in order to follow and rob a jewelry sales representative employed by Christopher Designs, a New York, N.Y. firm, and Christian Bauer, a Melbourne, Fla., firm. **Perdomo** stayed at the American Inn Hotel in Independence, Mo., according to the indictment. He allegedly communicated with other members of the robbery conspiracy via cell phone.

On March 6, 2003, **Perdomo** drove to Overland Park, Kan., the indictment alleges, in order to follow and rob the jewelry salesman, who was conducting business at a jewelry store in that city. **Perdomo**, brandishing a knife, allegedly confronted the salesman in the parking lot and stole \$658,316 worth of jewelry and precious stones.

After robbing the jewelry salesman, the indictment alleges, **Perdomo** intended to provide the stolen jewelry to **Palacios** for resale. The indictment alleges that **Palacios** made several cell phone calls to **Perdomo** and, on March 7, 2003, traveled from New York, N.Y., to Kansas City as part of the robbery conspiracy.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the two indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

Both cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney K. Michael Warner. They were investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Overland Park, Kan., Police Department.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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