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MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES
EXTRADITION OF LEADER OF INTERNATIONAL
MONEY LAUNDERING ORGANIZATION

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-In-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York, and HARRY J. CORBITT, the Superintendent of the New York State Police ("NYSP"), announced the extradition from Colombia of DAVID EDUARDO HELMUT MURCIA GUZMÁN, 28, on charges relating to his role in a conspiracy to launder millions of dollars worth of narcotics proceeds through Colombian marketing giant D.M.G. Group ("DMG"). MURCIA GUZMÁN is expected to arrive later today in Miami, Florida, where he will be presented in United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida. MURCIA GUZMÁN will be transferred to the Southern District of New York for prosecution at a later date.

According to the Superseding Indictment previously unsealed in Manhattan federal court:

The DMG Organization

DAVID EDUARDO HELMUT MURCIA GUZMÁN created DMG (named after MURCIA GUZMÁN's own initials) in 2003 as a vehicle for a multi-level marketing scheme, through which customers could buy pre-paid debit cards. DMG sold these pre-paid debit cards to customers in Latin America, who could use them to purchase electronics and other items at retail stores operated by DMG. By 2008, DMG's customers numbered approximately 400,000. By January 2009, DMG ceased operation.

The Money Laundering Conspiracy

MURCIA GUZMÁN and six others are charged with laundering narcotics proceeds through DMG and DMG's affiliated companies, using the Colombian Black Market Peso Exchange, an informal value transfer system commonly used to launder illicitly-obtained dollars in the United States, in exchange for pesos taken in for "legitimate" purchases in Colombia. For example, in the fall of 2007, MURCIA GUZMÁN and co-defendant MARGARITA LEONOR PABON CASTRO, 35, approached another individual in Colombia and said that they had cash -- apparently in U.S. dollars -- that they could not deposit into the Colombian banking system. MURCIA GUZMÁN and PABON CASTRO asked the individual to set up an account in the United States where these funds could be deposited. Thereafter, the individual opened an account at Merrill Lynch in the United States, under the name "Blackstone International Development" (the "Blackstone Account"). Neither MURCIA GUZMÁN nor PABON CASTRO were listed as owners of the Blackstone Account.

In March 2008, MURCIA GUZMÁN and PABON CASTRO told the same individual that they had provided \$2.2 million worth of Colombian Pesos to GERMAN ENRIQUE SERRANO-REYES, 45, in Colombia, and, in exchange, SERRANO-REYES had caused nearly \$2.2 million to be wired into the Blackstone Account through 18 separate wire transfers. In May 2008, the United States Government seized about \$2.2 million from the Blackstone Account pursuant to a court order. When MURCIA GUZMÁN was informed of the seizure of the Blackstone Account, MURCIA GUZMÁN told the individual who set up the account that he should not attempt to retrieve the contents of the account, and should not under any circumstances inform the authorities of MURCIA GUZMÁN's or PABON CASTRO's interest in the Blackstone Account.

Co-defendant WILLIAM SUÁREZ-SUÁREZ, 41, headed DMG's Colombian operations, including the attempted bribery of Colombian officials. In addition, SUÁREZ-SUÁREZ assisted MURCIA GUZMÁN and others in establishing hundreds of subsidiary and affiliated companies linked to DMG in countries including Colombia, Panama, and the United States.

The Indictment also alleges that DMG-affiliated defendants, including MURCIA GUZMÁN, SANTIAGO BARANCHUK-RUEDA, 34, DANIEL ANGEL RUEDA, 36, and LUIS FERNANDO CEDIEL ROZO, 34, coordinated the pick-up and transportation of millions of dollars in narcotics proceeds in Mexico. The defendants concealed narcotics proceeds by investing them in legitimate real estate and limited liability companies in the United States.

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MURCIA GUZMÁN, SUÁREZ-SUÁREZ, PABON CASTRO, ANGEL RUEDA, CEDIEL ROZO, BARANCHUK-RUEDA, and SERRANO-REYES are all charged with one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. If convicted, each defendant faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The case is assigned to United States District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY III.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force -- which is comprised of agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, and the NYSP -- and the DEA's Bogota Country Office. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the United States Marshals Service and the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement for their assistance. Mr. BHARARA also thanked the Colombian government and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs for its ongoing assistance.

United States Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "DAVID MURCIA GUZMÁN is charged with using his namesake company as cover for the laundering of illicit drug proceeds. MURCIA GUZMÁN allegedly played a shell game with dirty money, masking millions for narco-traffickers as legitimate transfers. This extradition affirms that we will not tolerate the abuse of the U.S. banking system to stimulate the black market economy. We will continue to pursue international money launderers who provide a lifeline for the global drug trade. We will work alongside our law enforcement partners at the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force and in Colombia, and Mexico in this vital work."

DEA Special Agent in Charge JOHN P. GILBRIDE stated: "Hiding behind a corporation name did not make this business legitimate. In fact, it was facilitating millions of narco drug dollars into pesos for drug traffickers worldwide. This extradition highlights law enforcement's international efforts to identify and arrest those who profit from the sale of illegal narcotics."

New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY stated: "Extradition signals Colombia's continuing commitment with the U.S. in fighting drug dealers. It is also important in attacking the money laundering that accompanies drug trafficking. The black market peso exchange is just one of many schemes to launder drug money and corrupt once legitimate business in the process. Left to their own devices, narcotics traffickers would undermine entire economies through drug trafficking, money laundering, extortion and corruption. This was an auspicious victory in a continuing fight."

Assistant United States Attorneys BENJAMIN A. NAFTALIS, TELEMACHUS P. KASULIS, and AMY LESTER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charge and allegations contained in the Indictment are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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