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UNLAWFUL FIREARMS TRAFFICKERS INDICTED ON MULTIPLE WEAPONS COUNTS

FRESNO -- United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, ATF Special Agent in Charge Stephen Martin, and Fresno Chief of Police Jerry Dyer announced today that a federal grand jury returned a twenty-two count indictment charging brothers ELENO RODRIGUEZ, 23, and ESTEVAN RODRIGUEZ, 20, both of Fresno, California with firearms trafficking and possession offenses.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and Fresno Police Department. The investigation was undertaken as part of the ongoing ATF Violent Crime Impact Team (VCIT) program, providing additional federal resources in Fresno to target violent crime and weapons-related offenses. Since the roll-out of the VCIT on June 1, 2005, a total of 51 federal indictments have been returned against 69 defendants.

The indictment alleges that between February 2007 and April 2007, ELENO and ESTEVAN RODRIGUEZ engaged in a conspiracy to sell firearms without a license. During the time of the conspiracy, the indictment charges that the RODRIGUEZ brothers sold firearms to a felon. It further charges that ESTEVAN RODRIGUEZ possessed a short-barreled shotgun and

ELENO RODRIGUEZ possessed firearms while being subject to a domestic violence restraining order.

"Fresno has experienced a welcome drop in the violent crime rate over the past year. Federal law enforcement will continue to provide whatever assistance we can to local authorities." said United States Attorney Scott.

ATF Special Agent in Charge Stephen K. Martin stated, "Illegal firearms trafficking is a crime that results in firearms that end up in the wrong hands. While criminals seek these suppliers, it's our job to put them out of business."

If convicted on all counts, ESTEVAN RODRIGUEZ faces a maximum of 145 years imprisonment, and ELENO RODRIGUEZ faces a maximum of 135 years imprisonment. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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