Beat: News

Individuals Charged with Robberies that Targeted Jewelry Salespeople

Millions of dollars' worth of gems

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USPA NEWS - A federal grand jury in Miami, Florida, returned a six-count indictment on June 29, which was unsealed today, charging three individuals with robbing jewelry salespeople of millions of dollars' worth of gems, other jewelry, and property.

Allan Lucas, Diana Grisales Basto, and Carlos Morales are charged with conspiring to commit Hobbs Act robbery and multiple counts of Hobbs Act robbery for forcefully taking and attempting to take jewelry and other property from victims engaged in the business of buying and selling jewelry throughout South Florida, between September 2019 and December 2020. According to court documents, the charged robberies occurred in Boca Raton, Miami Beach, Lake Worth, Boynton Beach, and Fort Pierce.

Specifically, Lucas, 30, of Miami, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery and five counts of Hobbs Act robbery. Grisales Basto, 37, a Colombian national, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery and four counts of Hobbs Act robbery. Morales, 44, of Miami, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery and one count of Hobbs Act robbery.

Lucas and Grisales Basto were already in state custody and scheduled to make their initial appearance on Friday, July 8th. Morales was arrested on July 2nd. Each count carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The FBI's Tampa Division is leading the investigation of the case with valuable assistance from the FBI's Miami Field Office, Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, Miami-Dade Police Department, Miami Beach Police Department, Tampa Police Department, Boca Raton Police Department, Palm Beach Sherriff's Office, Boynton Beach Police Department, Fort Pierce Police Department, and the Jewelry Security Alliance.

Trial Attorneys Lakeita F. Rox-Love and Christina Taylor of the Justice Department's Organized Crime and Gang Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Alejandra Lopez of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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