



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, September 26, 2008

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PIMA COUNTY KIDNAPPING SUSPECT CHARGED IN THREE FEDERAL CASES

TUCSON, Ariz. - A federal grand jury in Tucson returned three separate indictments against Robert A. Ergonis, 46, of Tucson, Ariz. on Wednesday for violations of drug, firearms and false statement laws. Warrants have been issued for his arrest. Ergonis is in custody at the Pima County Jail, pending trial on unrelated kidnapping and assault charges in Pima County case number CR 07-724912A.

The 2-count drug indictment alleges that beginning at a time unknown, through February 14, 2007, Ergonis conspired with others to possess with intent to distribute, and actually possessed with intent to distribute, 2,427.8 pounds of marijuana. A conviction for each of these crimes carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$4,000,000 fine or both.

The 2-count fraud indictment alleges that on March 12, 2007, and again on April 23, 2007, Ergonis lied to federal agents when he falsely claimed that several items of jewelry were missing from his house after it was searched by special agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. In fact, Ergonis knew where the jewelry in question was. A conviction for these crimes carries a maximum penalty of five years in federal prison, a \$250,000 fine or both.

The 2-count firearms indictment alleges that on February 7-8, 2008, Ergonis, a convicted felon, unlawfully possessed seven firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. A conviction for these crimes carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, a \$4,000,000 fine or both.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. If the defendant is convicted, the U.S. District Court Judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines in determining an actual sentence. These guidelines provide appropriate sentencing ranges, however, the judge is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigations in these cases were conducted by the Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General; Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the Drug Enforcement Administration; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the U.S. Marshals Service; the Tucson Police Department; and the Fugitive Investigation Strike Team. The prosecution is being handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBERS: CR-08-1205-TUC-DCB; CR 08-1206-TUC-JMR; CR 08-1207-TUC-RCC
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-255(Ergonis)

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