



U.S. Department of Justice

Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez
United States Attorney
District of Puerto Rico

*350 Carlos Chardon Avenue, Suite 1201
Hato Rey, PR 00918
PHONE: 787-766-5656
FAX: 787-772-4012*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 17, 2016

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/pr/>

Contact: U.S. Attorney's Office
Lymarie V. Llovet-Ayala
Public Affairs Specialist
(787) 766-5656; (787) 340-1835

**Individual Sentenced To 87 Months In Prison For
Conspiracy To Deprive A Person Of Civil Rights**

SAN JUAN, P.R. –Francisco Martínez-Mercado was sentenced to 87 months in prison and three years of supervised release for conspiracy to deprive a person of civil rights, announced Rosa Emilia Rodríguez-Vélez, United States Attorney for the District of Puerto Rico. Defendant was found guilty to the charge on February 26, 2016.

The evidence presented at trial showed beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant, a sworn police officer and federal task force officer planned and executed a violation of civil rights by conducting an illegal search and seizure of an apartment where he knew there were drugs and money. The defendant came up with a plan, sought out the necessary personnel, including two other corrupt police officers and a marked patrol car. Witnesses testified that they were hired by the defendant to sit in a marked patrol car outside of a condominium in Isla Verde while two thugs broke into said apartment.

During the course of the trial, the government presented overwhelming evidence that showed that the defendant used his knowledge and contacts as a police officer in order to plan and execute the illegal search and seizure object of the indictment. Had the defendant not been a police officer, he certainly would not have had access to other corrupt officers who in turn had access to the patrol car and radio that were used on his behalf.

“The evidence showed that defendant used his law enforcement knowledge to do the opposite of what he was supposed to do with the trust that was placed in him,” said Rosa E. Rodríguez-Vélez. “The defendant abused his position of trust and used his contacts in the police to commit the offense.”

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Teresa Zapata-Valladares y Mariana Bauzá. The case was investigated by the FBI's San Juan Division with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General's Miami Field Office.

###