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United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan
District of Massachusetts

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CONTACT: SAMANTHA MARTIN
PHONE: (617) 748-3139
SAMANTHA.MARTIN@USDOJ.GOV

PEABODY MAN SENTENCED FOR ATTEMPTED MURDER-FOR-HIRE

Boston, MA... A former resident of Peabody was sentenced today in federal court in connection with attempting to arrange a murder-for-hire of his estranged wife and 14-month old daughter while he was in jail awaiting trial on charges of kidnaping and rape in connection with an earlier attack on his wife.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan and Glenn N. Anderson, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in New England, announced today that U.S. District Judge George A. O'Toole, Jr. sentenced **GUILLERMO FREDERICO VASCO**, age 31, formerly of Peabody, to 20 years in prison, to be followed by 2 years of supervised release. On November 15, 2006, a trial jury convicted **VASCO** of two counts of using the United States mail in soliciting the murder of his wife and daughter and of three counts of using the telephone to solicit the murder of his wife.

"Guillermo Vasco was convicted of the cowardly and despicable act of plotting to have his spouse and daughter murdered," stated U.S. Attorney Sullivan. "The prosecution of this matter and today's sentence should send a strong message to men who contemplate committing acts of violence against women and children. They will be aggressively investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

Evidence presented during the six-day trial proved that in approximately March 2005, while incarcerated at the Essex County Correctional Facility ("ECCF") on pending state charges, **VASCO** approached another detainee at the jail to inquire if the detainee knew anyone who would kill **VASCO**'s wife and daughter for money. At the time **VASCO** was awaiting trial on charges relating to the May 5, 2004, abduction of his wife and daughter at knife point from the Peabody home they formerly shared. Those state charges are still pending.

After being approached by **VASCO**, the detainee informed law enforcement. Thereafter under the direction of ATF agents, the detainee told **VASCO** that he had a friend in Maine who could carry out the hit. **VASCO** first contacted the "hit man" (actually an undercover ATF agent) through a letter sent to the hit man's supposed post office box in Maine. The letter, received on April 7, 2005, was in code-- referring to **VASCO**'s estranged wife as a "Nickie," a dog, and to his daughter as "Candy," the puppy. He asked that "Nickie" be "put...to sleep," buried outside of the state, ten feet down and "do not forget the cement thing," a reference to having the body covered with cement. As for the "puppy", he wanted to know if "Candy would be able to see the family," a reference to her abduction and delivery to his family in Ecuador, but "if not she must stay with Nickie down there."

On April 26, 2005, an undercover ATF agent posing as the hit man met with **VASCO** at the jail in a private inmate/attorney meeting room. The meeting was recorded on video. During that meeting, **VASCO** and the undercover agent discussed methods for disposing of **VASCO**'s wife's body after she was murdered. Ultimately **VASCO** decided that the undercover ATF agent should put her body in an oil drum, filled with cement to weigh it down, and throw it into the ocean. Holes also would be drilled into the oil drum so that the body would eventually be eaten. At this meeting, and in other conversations, **VASCO** said that he wanted his daughter kidnaped at the time of his wife's murder and brought to his mother in Ecuador via Canada. **VASCO** agreed to pay \$10,000 to the undercover ATF agent to murder his wife and another \$10,000 to have his daughter kidnaped.

After being informed of the investigation, **VASCO**'s estranged wife agreed to pose for photographs as if she had been murdered. She was made up to appear as though she had been beaten and shot in the head. She then posed lying on the ground as though dead in a wooded area adjacent to a body of water and next to a large oil drum. The ATF took a number of digital pictures of **VASCO**'s wife and the scene. On May 17, 2005 the undercover agent again met with **VASCO** at the jail, showed **VASCO** some of the pictures of his wife's supposedly dead body, and told **VASCO** that his daughter had been kidnaped and was with a friend. **VASCO** smiled while the undercover ATF agent described murdering his wife. At the end of this meeting **VASCO** thanked the undercover ATF agent and stated, "I really appreciate that. And you've got, right now, my friendship, my loyalty, my respect. And anything you need, just come to me."

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sandra S. Bower and Rachel E. Hershfang in Sullivan's Criminal Division.

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