



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Northern District of Texas

*1100 Commerce Street, 3rd Floor
Dallas, Texas 75242-1699*

*Telephone (214)659-8600
Fax (214)767-0978*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: 214/659-8707
www.usdoj.gov/usao/txn

DALLAS, TEXAS
MARCH 10, 2006

**THREE DALLAS MEN INDICTED ON FEDERAL
CARJACKING AND FIREARMS CHARGES - ALL FACE LIFE IMPRISONMENT**

One Victim is Hurricane Katrina Evacuee from New Orleans

United States Attorney Richard B. Roper announced that a federal grand jury in Dallas has returned an indictment charging three Dallas men with carjacking and firearms charges. The three-count indictment charges Felipe Acosta, a/k/a "Pepe," Guillermo Flores, a/k/a "Willy," and Gonzalo Gandara, a/k/a "G-G" each with one count of carjacking, one count of using, carrying and brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence and one count of possessing an unregistered firearm. All three defendants have been detained, without bail, pending trial. A trial date has not yet been set.

According to documents filed in court and evidence presented at the defendants' detention hearings, on the morning of January 18, 2006, Acosta, Flores and Gandara embarked on an armed robbery spree in Dallas using a sawed-off shotgun. They were arrested early that afternoon by Dallas Police Department officers shortly after they had attempted an armed robbery.

About 7:25 a.m. that morning, a person was passing out flyers at an apartment complex in Dallas when he was approached by Acosta and Flores, who got out of a dark-colored Lincoln that had stopped. Flores asked the victim if he had anything of value at which point Acosta pulled out a sawed-off shotgun. The victim said he didn't carry money while at work, at which point Acosta put the weapon to his head. Flores took the victim's cell phone and keys to his vehicle. Then the driver of the Lincoln, Gandara, pulled up and shouted to Flores and Acosta to "get out of here." Flores and Acosta entered the Lincoln and the three men sped away in the Lincoln. The victim reported the incident to the Dallas Police Department.

Shortly thereafter, at approximately 7:40 a.m., a woman drove her sport utility vehicle to pick up another woman, a displaced hurricane evacuee from New Orleans, at an apartment complex in Dallas. The evacuee entered the vehicle, with her three-year-old child, and as they were about to leave, a dark colored Lincoln pulled up and blocked them. Gandara approached them under the guise of asking for directions and when they could not help, Acosta approached with a sawed-off shotgun and ordered them out of the vehicle and onto the ground. Acosta even pointed the weapon at the child seated in the backseat of the vehicle and took the victims' purses. Both victims pleaded for their lives and for the life of the child. As the victims' belongings were being searched for valuables, one of the three men exclaimed, "Y'all ain't got no money?!" At this point, one of the victims informed them she was from New Orleans to which one of the men exclaimed "Welcome to Texas, bitch." The three men took their purses, cell phones and keys to the vehicle, and sped away. The women immediately reported it to the Dallas Police Department.

At approximately 8:00 a.m. that morning, the dark colored Lincoln, driven by Gandara, stopped behind a work van that was driven by a painter who had stopped to pick up workers. The van was obviously equipped for use in the painting business. Acosta and Flores exited the Lincoln and approached this victim under the guise of wanting to employ him to do a painting job. The victim exited the van to discuss the matter at which time Acosta produced a large pistol-like firearm and demanded that he surrender the van. They shoved the victim away and Flores and Acosta got into the van and drove away, with Gandara following in the Lincoln.

At approximately 1:00 p.m. that afternoon, the three defendants attempted another robbery, attempting to rob three men who were working at a rent house in Dallas. Gandara produced a sawed-off shotgun threatening to kill one of the victims if he didn't hand over his wallet. The victims were able to repel the defendants and reported the incident to the Dallas Police Department. Dallas Police Department officers arrested the three defendants at about 2:40 p.m. at Gandara's home.

An indictment is an accusation by a federal grand jury and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. However, if convicted on all counts of the indictment, Acosta, age 18, Flores, age 19, and Gandara, age 19, each face a maximum statutory sentence of life imprisonment and a \$750,000 fine.

United States Attorney Roper praised the investigative efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Dallas Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United State Attorney Gary Tromblay.