



United States Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation

September 18, 2006

FBI, SPRINGFIELD DIVISION
<http://springfield.fbi.gov>

FBI Special Agent in Charge, Weysan Dun, Springfield Division, together with Champaign, Illinois Chief of Police R.T. Finney, announced the arrest of Adrian Lopez and Terence Merritt on federal kidnaping charges. Lopez, age 32, from Mattoon, Illinois, was arrested Friday morning, 09/15/2006 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Merritt, age 18, also from Mattoon, Illinois, was arrested Friday morning, 09/15/2006 in Portland, Indiana.

Federal criminal complaints were filed today, 09/18/2006, in the United States District Court, Central District of Illinois, charging both men with kidnaping. Lopez and Merritt appeared before the Court this afternoon, in Champaign, Illinois.

On 09/11/2006, Antonio Aguas, a business owner from Champaign, Illinois, was reported missing by employees of the company business. On the same day Antonio Aguas' family received a telephone call from an unknown subject, claiming to be holding Antonio.

Over the next few hours, law enforcement officers from several local, state, and federal agencies mobilized to locate Antonio Aguas.

On 09/12/2006, the family received a ransom demand over the telephone from an unknown subject. Over the next three days, there were several telephone conversations with unknown subjects, attempting to secure the safe return of Antonio Aguas.

On 09/15/2006, in the early morning hours, the family was directed by an unknown subject to travel to Fort Wayne, Indiana with the ransom money. In Fort Wayne, the family was directed to a BP gas station and told to drop the ransom money nearby.

The criminal complaint alleges that shortly after the ransom money was dropped in Fort Wayne, an individual, later identified as Adrian Lopez, was seen by surveillance

Agents retrieving the ransom money. Shortly thereafter, Lopez was arrested and the ransom money recovered.

Investigation had also revealed a location where Antonio Aguas was possibly being held, in Portland, Indiana. Shortly after the arrest of Lopez, Agents entered a room at the Budget Inn, 1411 U.S. 27 North, in Portland, Indiana, and were successful in safely recovering Antonio Aguas. Terence Merritt was also arrested at the Budget Inn at that time.

Kidnaping, in violation of Title 18 United States Code, section 1201, carries a possible penalty of life imprisonment. Members of the public are reminded that a criminal complaint is only an allegation and that all subjects are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

FBI Special Agent in Charge, Weysan Dun, stated "this is a classic example of the power of combined law enforcement and intelligence resources. Each law enforcement agency called upon to assist in the intelligence analysis and search for Mr. Aguas immediately dedicated resources to this investigation. Within minutes of the request for assistance, Agents began pouring in from three surrounding FBI offices: Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Louis. The benefits of ongoing liaison with our law enforcement partners and crisis management preparedness are realized today."

The Springfield FBI and the Champaign Police Department would like to thank the numerous law enforcement agencies who were instrumental in the safe recovery of Antonio Aguas, including:

Allen County, Indiana Sheriff's Department;
Aurora, Illinois Police Department;
Beloit, Wisconsin Police Department;
Bloomington/Normal, Illinois Police Departments;
FBI, Chicago;
FBI, Indianapolis;
FBI, Milwaukee
FBI, Saint Louis;
Illinois State Police;
Indiana State Police;
LaSalle County, Illinois Sheriff's Department;
Mattoon, Illinois Police Department;
Peru, Illinois Police Department;
Portland, Indiana Police Department;
United States Marshals Service