

Lawrence Man Sentenced to Life in Prison for Kidnapping

The leader of a Lawrence-based kidnapping crew was sentenced today to life in federal prison for his role in a 2012 kidnapping.

U.S. District Court Judge Richard G. Stearns sentenced Danny Veloz, 41, of Lawrence, Mass., to life in prison today for his role in leading a violent, sophisticated crew that targeted drug dealers for kidnappings.

Veloz was arrested following a wide-ranging investigation that targeted kidnapping and home invasion crews operating in the City of Lawrence. The majority of these kidnappings were carried out by organized, armed, violent crews often referred to as Joloperros (loosely translated as “Stick-up Guys”). Veloz’s crew consisted of four other Lawrence men, Jose Guzman, a/k/a “Cano”; Gadiel Romero, a/k/a “TC”; Jose Matos, a/k/a “Boyca”; and Luis Reynoso, a/k/a “Prieto”; as well as Henry Maldonado, of Manchester, N.H.; and Thomas Wallace of Raymond, N.H.

On July 23, 2012, armed with firearms and wearing t-shirts with the word “police” on them, the crew kidnapped two men at gunpoint on Allston Street in Lawrence. The victims were transported to Manchester, N.H., and held overnight – during which time one was burned with a hot iron – before being rescued by law enforcement. The kidnapping was one of several kidnappings or attempted kidnappings committed by Veloz’s crew in 2012. During trial, several individuals testified that in addition to the July 23, 2012, kidnapping, Veloz and his crew also attempted kidnappings on May 8, 2012, and July 8, 2012.

A search of Veloz’s home resulted in the seizure of two laptop computers containing information about GPS tracking devices used to commit the kidnappings, as well as cell phones used by

Veloz to communicate with his associates.

Since the investigation began in 2012, more than 20 people have been convicted of either kidnapping-related offenses or being associated with members of Lawrence-based kidnapping or home invasion crews. Romero, Wallace, and Matos were sentenced to 23 years, 13 years, and 12 years in prison, respectively. Maldonado, Guzman, and Reynoso are scheduled to be sentenced on November 21 and 22, 2017.

The charge of conspiracy to commit kidnapping provides for a sentence of up to life in prison, five years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.