



## NEWS RELEASE

**Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes**  
Passaic County Prosecutor's Office  
401 Grand Street  
Paterson, NJ 07505  
(973) 881-4800

---

### **ARMED ROBBERY INDICTMENT RETURNED**

---

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes has announced that Rene Leon and Maria Cruz have been indicted by a Passaic County grand jury for a series of armed robberies of convenience stores committed during March 2009 in Clifton, Paterson, Woodland Park and Garfield, New Jersey. The indictment alleges that defendant Leon would enter each of the stores armed with a handgun and commit the robbery as defendant Cruz waited outside in their vehicle to facilitate the getaway. During one of these robberies, a victim had his hands and feet bound with duct tape. In another, a store owner, his wife and two small children were ordered at gunpoint to lay face down behind the counter as the money was being taken.

The indictment charges both defendants with seven counts of first degree armed robbery, one count of second degree attempted robbery, nine counts of second degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, and nine counts of third degree unlawful weapon possession. In addition, defendant Leon is charged with seven counts of fourth degree aggravated assault, one count of third degree aggravated assault, seven counts of third degree terroristic threats, one count of third degree criminal restraint, two counts of third degree endangering the welfare of a child, and nine counts of second degree certain persons not to have weapons. If convicted of all offenses, these defendants are subject to a prison term of one hundred fifty years with a seventy five year period of parole ineligibility.

Prosecutor Valdes wishes to credit the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, the Bergen County Sheriff's Department, the Garfield Police Department and the Clifton Police Department for their participation in a joint task force which investigated these crimes. Also, Prosecutor Valdes would like to thank the Paterson, Passaic and Woodland Park Police Departments for their assistance in this investigation.

An indictment is merely an accusation and all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.