

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Defendants to Serve Time in Prison for String of Jewelry Burglaries
State vs. Maykel Olides Hernandez, Javier Guerra-Morales, and Giorge Navea

March 6, 2025 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that three defendants accused of a string of commercial burglaries have pled guilty to all charges, including violation of the RICO Act (4 counts), smash and grab burglary, theft by taking, criminal damage to property in the second degree, and possession of tools for the commission of a crime.

In separate hearings on Feb. 27 and March 5, Superior Court Judge Tony Baker sentenced Maykel Olides Hernandez, Javier Guerra-Morales, and Giorge Navea to prison and ordered that they pay restitution to the jewelry stores.

Charges stem from five different burglaries that occurred from December 2022 through March 2023 in Cherokee, Forsyth, Cobb, and Fulton counties, and Knox County, Tennessee.

“These defendants worked together in a coordinated effort, with a clear plan to target specific jewelry stores and steal valuable merchandise. Although four of the stores they burglarized were outside of Cherokee County, we were able to charge the defendants under Georgia’s RICO Act,” said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “Law enforcement partners from multiple agencies played a crucial role in this case, enabling Cherokee County to combat organized retail crime within our jurisdiction and beyond.”

The Cherokee County burglary occurred on Jan. 4, 2023. At approximately 11:36 p.m. that night, an alarm at a jewelry store on Cumming Highway went off. Since all points of entry appeared to be secure, the alarm seemed to be a false alarm. The next day, Canton Police Department responded to a 911 call reporting a burglary. Surveillance video showed individuals had entered the store through a hole they had cut in the roof. The burglars stole merchandise and caused substantial damage to the store, for a total loss of about \$1.3 million.

Canton Police detectives reached out to other law enforcement agencies that were investigating jewelry store burglaries in their jurisdictions. Two similar burglaries occurred in December 2022 and January 2023 at stores in Forsyth and Cobb counties. Then, in March 2023, a jewelry store in Knox County, Tennessee, and a store in Alpharetta were also burglarized. In all five incidents, the perpetrators entered the business after cutting a hole in the roof.

“Law enforcement officers from multiple agencies worked together to investigate and arrest the suspects. Forsyth County Sheriff’s Office was instrumental in linking the burglaries and identifying the suspects by using cell tower data,” said Assistant District Attorney Rachel Murphy, of the Gang and Organized Crime Unit, who prosecuted this case on behalf of the State. “Collaboration among agencies was key in identifying the scheme carried out by these defendants, which included breaking into the jewelry stores at night by cutting holes in the ceilings,

disabling alarm systems once inside, damaging property, stealing valuable jewelry, and reselling the jewelry for profit.”

The investigation later determined that the defendants took the stolen merchandise to a Florida location to be melted down and resold. Of the five stores, the defendants were able to steal merchandise from two businesses: the Canton store (approximately \$1.3 million) and the Alpharetta store (approximately \$400,000).

The defendants were sentenced as follows:

- **Maykel Olides Hernandez**, 40, entered a non-negotiated guilty plea on Feb. 27 and was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Tony Baker to 30 years, with the first 13 years in confinement. As a recidivist offender pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 17-10-7 (a) and (c), Hernandez will be required to serve the entire prison portion of his sentence without parole eligibility.
- **Javier Guerra-Morales**, 33, entered a negotiated guilty plea on Feb. 27 and was sentenced to 20 years, with the first 9 years in confinement.
- **George Navea**, 35, entered a negotiated guilty plea on March 5 and was sentenced to 25 years, with the first 10 years in confinement.

The three defendants were also ordered to pay approximately \$1.3 million restitution. This total was calculated based on store damages, stolen merchandise, and insurance deductibles. The defendants are also banned from Cherokee County, may not enter the premises of any of the five jewelry stores, and may have no contact with each other.

The case was investigated by Canton Police Department, with assistance from Forsyth County Sheriff’s Office, Cobb County Police Department, and Alpharetta Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Rachel Murphy, of the Gang and Organized Crime Unit, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

The RICO Act

Georgia’s Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act penalizes organized crime that is motivated by pecuniary gain or economic or physical threat or injury. Crimes charged under the RICO Act typically involve two or more defendants acting together as an “enterprise” to carry out a common scheme or motive to effectuate the crimes. Georgia’s RICO Act allows prosecutors to charge defendants for the crimes they commit not only statewide, but nationwide as well.

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The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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