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**For Immediate Release: *Jury Sentences Ponzi Scheme Criminal to 79 Years***

(Dallas, Texas) –On Thursday, December 6, 2018, Juan Miguel Lopez was found guilty of money laundering and securities fraud for cheating individuals who invested millions of dollars in his companies.

The trial lasted two weeks but it only took jurors about 20 minutes to find Lopez guilty. On Friday, jurors gave prosecutors exactly what they had asked for. They returned a sentence of seventy-nine years. One year for each of his victims.

Lopez sold fraudulent investment contracts to about 79 individuals totaling 4.9 million dollars. The contracts were issued by Mito Bank, Mito Capital LLC, Mito Financial LLC, and Mito Group. The companies were supposed to use the money to finance small business loans, which in turn, would generate revenue for investors.

Lopez promised investors a monthly interest rate of 3% to 8%. In reality, he was operating a Ponzi scheme. He made interest payments to some investors with money from other investors who purchased investment contracts.

Lead Prosecutor Alexis Goldate, along with Deputy Chief's Stephanie Martin and Rick Watson prosecuted the case for the Dallas County District Attorney's Office. "Lopez was all about the thrill of the con. It takes a certain kind of evil to look someone in the face and lie to them in order to swindle innocent victims out of their life savings," said Goldate in her closing remarks.

The guilty verdict and stiff sentence should send a strong message to anyone contemplating engaging in this kind of criminal activity. The DAs Office will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law.

Deputy Chief Martin added, “Lopez preyed on a culture and a heritage that prides itself on helping each other. He targeted Hispanics who were not able to otherwise get loans.”

Lopez was immediately returned to his cell in the Lew Sterrett Jail to begin serving his sentence. He still faces deportation to Mexico.

The prosecution team and the DAs Office would like to thank the jury for their attention, time and diligence in their service to the criminal justice system and to our community.

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