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YOUNG DEFENDANT IN A 12 KILO COCAINE DEAL FREED AFTER 21 MONTHS IN CUSTODY ON *PRO BONO* CASE TAKEN BY FIRM

(Los Angeles, California), April 1, 2005

Federal defendant Robert Morales was freed today after being in custody for 21 months. On May 22, 2003, defendant Morales, at the bequest of his Uncle, foolishly embroiled himself in a 12 Kilo Cocaine deal. Under the mandatory minimum sentencing regime enacted by the United States Congress in 1986, Mr. Morales was facing a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison.

In May of 2003, the law firm of Ronald Richards and Associates remained on the case after indictment *pro bono*, to save the life of an 18 year old who had no resources to hire the firm. The case was referred to the firm by Terrence Roden, Esq.

Since there have been many changes to the Federal Sentencing Guidelines since May of 2003, Mr. Richards in conjunction with a very reasonable and understanding United States Attorney's Office forged ahead to try and come to a creative solution to circumvent the mandatory minimums within the bounds of the law.

Using the firms' creative knowledge of the then intact mandatory guidelines, Mr. Morales achieved what very few persons in his situation in custody can achieve, FREEDOM. Even though he plead guilty to the cocaine conspiracy, creative lawyering, compassionate prosecutors, and intelligent judges, who render sentences that fit the individual to the crime, can achieve a fair and just result.

The firm would also like to thank Louise Hay for her early work on the file as well as E. Christine, Esq. and Terrence Roden, Esq. The firm especially thanks Assistant United States Attorney Jaime Guerrero who we are all fortunate to have in the United States Attorney's Office. As the district court commented today, Mr. Guerrero is "is a very reasonable prosecutor".

It is cases like this that make lawyering a worthwhile and noble profession. The firm takes pro bono cases like this throughout the year for those in severe and dire financial need and is always available to seek justice for all, not just a privileged few.

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