



RIVERSIDE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE
MIKE HESTRIN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

WEBSITE: WWW.RIVCODA.ORG

TWITTER: @RIVCODA

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CONTACT: JOHN HALL
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
951.955.8662

**MENIFEE MAN SENTENCED TO 60 YEARS FOR EXTORTING BUSINESS OWNERS
CLAIMING THEY VIOLATED THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT**

RIVERSIDE – A Superior Court judge has sentenced a Menifee man to 60 years on 143 counts including extortion by letter, extortion, attempted extortion, and grand theft.

Rodolfo DeHoyos, DOB: 3-23-60, appeared before Judge Thomas Kelly on Aug. 14, 2017, at the Hall of Justice in Riverside. The judge sentenced DeHoyos to 60 years total – 20 years in custody in the county jail, and the remaining 40 years under mandatory supervision under Penal Code section 1170 (h), commonly known as AB 109 or “sentencing realignment”. DeHoyos was taken into custody the same day to begin his custody time. He was also ordered to pay \$58,000 in restitution to the 58 victims in this case.

DeHoyos entered guilty pleas to the court on all 143 counts on Nov. 29, 2016. This was not a plea agreement with the DA’s Office so the sentence was handed down at the discretion of the judge.

The crimes happened over a two-year period from December 2013 to December 2015. DeHoyos concocted a scam to take advantage of business owners across the state. During the investigation it was determined that DeHoyos likely perpetrated his scheme on more than 1,000 California businesses.

DeHoyos, or someone he would have working for him, would enter a business, look around for a short time, and then accuse the business owner of violating very minor infractions of the American Disabilities Act/California’s Unruh Act, which protects the rights of those with disabilities. DeHoyos or his coworker would then give the owner a document from his Riverside County “business”, ADA Advocates and Consulting.

A letter also was given to the business owner containing statements like, “Please understand that if you deny my good faith effort to enter into negotiations to resolve this dispute, you may be held civilly liable” and “My offer to resolve this dispute outside of a courtroom will remain open for three business days from this notice”. DeHoyos would threaten these business owners with an expensive civil lawsuit, usually \$25,000 or \$30,000, if they did not pay him the amount of money he requested. Because of a lack of understanding of the law by some business owners, along with the fear of a large lawsuit putting them out of business, many would pay DeHoyos smaller amounts of money to make him and the threatened lawsuit go away.

The case, RIF1502647, was prosecuted by Deputy DA Heather Ferris of the DA’s Consumer Protection Team.

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