

# Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York

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## **Manhattan doctor pleads guilty to illegally selling painkiller prescriptions to drug trafficking organization**

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, announced today that Dr. ROBERT S. GIBBS, SR., a licensed internal medicine physician, pleaded guilty to illegally selling prescriptions for powerful narcotic painkillers to a drug trafficking ring, and other crimes.

GIBBS, aged 75, pleaded guilty to three charges contained in a 58-count indictment: Count 2, Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree; Count 4, Criminal Sale of a Prescription for a Controlled Substance; and Count 46, Criminal Facilitation in the Second Degree. Under the terms of his guilty plea this morning before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Michael R. Sonberg, GIBBS is expected to receive a sentence five years of probation and to forfeit approximately \$48,000 in criminal proceeds. GIBBS has also agreed to surrender his medical license. He is out on \$50,000 bail pending sentencing on October 29.

GIBBS was arrested in January at his Harlem office, located at 10 West 135th Street, Suite 1P, and charged with writing dozens of illegal prescriptions for oxycodone for individuals not under his care in exchange for cash payments. These prescriptions were collected by a drug trafficking ring for distribution on the black market as part of a conspiracy that dated back to 2009.

The arrest and guilty plea were the result of an 18-month investigation by members of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, intelligence officers with the NYPD's 19<sup>th</sup> Precinct, agents with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), New York Division, investigators with the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE), the New York State Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) and the New York City's Human Resources Administration's Bureau of Fraud Investigation (BFI).

Charges are still pending against RONALD VAUGHAN, the alleged leader of the narcotic trafficking organization that illegally obtained painkiller prescriptions from GIBBS. Named in the same indictment as GIBBS, VAUGHAN is accused of obtaining illegal prescriptions for oxycodone, filling prescriptions under his own name and an alias, and recruiting "runners" to fill prescriptions in a pyramid-style scheme.

VAUGHAN allegedly supplied GIBBS with numerous individuals' personal information, including names and dates of birth, to be used on prescriptions. In most cases this information corresponded with runners who had been recruited to fill prescriptions for VAUGHAN's organization.

As part of the conspiracy, GIBBS wrote out prescriptions for controlled substances – typically 180 pills of oxycodone at 30 mg strength – without ever having met or treated the individuals he named on the prescriptions. GIBBS also vouched for prescriptions in instances where pharmacists called for verification. The charges in the indictment related to 42 prescriptions for pills with an approximate street value of more than \$150,000.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN thanked members of her office's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, the NYPD's 19th Precinct, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE), the New York State Office of the Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) and the New York City's Human Resources Administration's Bureau of Fraud Investigation (BFI).