

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



**HEROIN SEIZURES SOAR IN 2014**

**2014 Annual Report**

*In 2014, joint investigations by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and its local, state and federal law enforcement partners resulted in the seizure of over 750 lbs. of heroin, which is three times the amount seized in previous years.*

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# Message from the Special Narcotics Prosecutor

Photo Credit: R. Umar Ablasi, Photographer



*Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan announces the results of two major heroin investigations at DEA New York Division headquarters.*

This year's annual report highlights the proliferation of large scale heroin production in New York City, which has become one of the most significant distribution hubs in the country. The sheer volume of heroin pouring into our city far exceeds anything we have ever seen before. In 2014, investigations conducted by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP), in collaboration with our local, state and federal partners, resulted in the seizure of approximately 750 pounds of heroin—an amount three times greater than that seized in preceding years.

The estimated street value of this heroin is upwards of \$100 million. But the truest gauge of heroin's impact is the untold tragedy it would have visited on the people of this city, state and region if it had not been taken off the street.

Reducing the supply of heroin and prescription opioid pills is a top priority for SNP, as these drugs are most likely to cause overdose deaths in the city. The rate of fatal overdoses involving opioid prescription drugs increased by 256% from 2000 to 2013. Recently, the rate of heroin overdose deaths has outpaced deaths caused by pill overdoses. In 2013, heroin was involved in 54% of all overdose deaths in New York City, making it the most common substance involved in drug fatalities.

The geographic stranglehold of heroin abuse reflects its two-fisted grip on our city. Three of the five top neighborhoods for heroin overdoses are in the Bronx, while the other two are in Staten Island. The devastation caused by heroin cuts across race, ethnicity and economic status.

New York City-based drug trafficking groups transport significant amounts of heroin to markets throughout the Northeast, where they can fetch the highest prices. In 2014, SNP established a new Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT) to share intelligence and coordinate with investigators and prosecutors in these suburban and upstate jurisdictions. By identifying the drug organizations responsible for saturating the Northeast with heroin, and tracking these groups back to their source of supply in New York City, we cut off supply at the top of the distribution chain.

*Bridget G. Brennan*  
Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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# About the Office

An independent prosecutors' office with citywide jurisdiction, the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) is responsible for felony narcotics investigations and prosecutions in the five boroughs of New York City. Founded in 1971, it is the only agency of its kind in the United States.

Created in response to a burgeoning heroin epidemic and spike in violent crime, SNP was granted broad authority under New York State Judiciary Laws to root out sophisticated narcotics trafficking organizations and track offenders across traditional jurisdictional boundaries. Since its inception, SNP has worked closely with local, state and federal law enforcement partners to dismantle drug networks, money laundering enterprises and entrenched local gangs in neighborhoods across the city and beyond.

Renowned for its wiretap investigations, SNP is a leader in the use of cutting-edge electronic technology to identify and pursue members of criminal enterprises from street-level dealers to top suppliers. In recent years, SNP has applied its technological expertise to confronting the explosion of prescription drug abuse and diversion, and the prosecution of violent gangs. The office is also committed to reducing demand for narcotics by raising public awareness and facilitating treatment for addicted offenders.

Assistant District Attorneys are assigned to the office by the city's five District Attorneys and placed into one of three divisions: the Investigation Division, the Trial Division or the Alternative Sentencing Division.

The first Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Frank Rogers, was appointed in January 1972. He was succeeded by Hon. Sterling Johnson, Jr., who headed SNP for 16 years before becoming a federal judge in the Eastern District of New York. Robert H. Silbering was named the Special Narcotics Prosecutor in 1992 and served for six years.

On May 1, 1998, Bridget G. Brennan was appointed Special Narcotics Prosecutor by the city's five District Attorneys. Under her direction, the office has developed innovative strategies to stem the flow of drugs into the city and target emerging problems, such as the related surges in heroin trafficking and prescription drug diversion, and the use of social media to coordinate criminal activity by violent gangs. In 2014, Ms. Brennan established the Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT). Ms. Brennan previously launched the Digital Forensic Services Unit, the Prescription Drug Investigation Unit (PDIU), the Narcotics Gang Unit and the Money Laundering and Financial Investigation Unit.



*Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan discusses the surging supply of heroin during an interview with Sam Roberts on The New York Times Close Up.*

# High Price of Heroin

Heroin trafficking is a highly lucrative business. As shipments pass from international drug cartels to big-box packaging operations in New York City and street-level dealers across the region, each handler takes a sizeable profit and the value multiplies.

## International Traffickers



## Heroin "Mill" Packaging Operations



## Markets in NYC and the Region



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### ***Kilo: Wholesaler***

**\$60,000**

International narcotics traffickers form heroin into rectangular blocks or the shape of shoe soles for smuggling. Heroin travels across the U.S. border to major distribution hubs, such as New York City.

### ***Kilo: Retail Distributor***

**\$200,000  
to  
\$400,000**

Heroin is packaged for retail distribution at “mill” operations in New York City. Mill workers fill individual-dose glassine envelopes, each containing a miniscule amount of heroin mixed with a dilutant. The glassines are then bundled together and wrapped in paper. Those who run the mills stand to make significant profits.

### ***Kilo: Street-level Dealer***

**\$250,000  
to  
\$1,000,000**

New York City-based groups sell heroin to local dealers or transport loads to cities throughout the Northeast. Street prices vary from \$5 to \$20 per glassine, depending on the market. Firearms are used to protect the investment. Often street dealers purchase heroin where prices are low and then resell in areas where heroin is scarcer and more expensive.

# Trends

## Skyrocketing Heroin Supply Drives Overdose Rates

The exploding epidemic of opioid abuse and overdose deaths affects every region in the U.S., but nowhere more than New York City, which has emerged as the nation's most significant heroin market and distribution hub. According to the DEA, approximately 20% of the heroin seized nationwide since 2010 was recovered in New York State.

In 2014, joint investigations with SNP and our law enforcement partners resulted in the seizure of three times as much heroin as in previous years—approximately 342 kilograms (750 lbs.), including an exceptionally high number of larger shipments in the 20 kilogram (44 lbs.) range.

Skyrocketing seizures are a reflection of an alarming upsurge in the availability of heroin and the resulting escalation of overdose deaths. Heroin and prescription opioid painkillers are a major focus for SNP, as both fuel the current epidemic of opioid addiction and abuse. The rate of overdose deaths involving opioid prescription drugs increased by 256% from 2000 to 2013. However, fatal overdose deaths due to heroin have outstripped pill-related deaths

in New York City, doubling between 2010 and 2013. In 2013, 54% of all fatal drug poisonings in the city involved heroin, making it the most common substance involved in overdose deaths, according to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). This mirrors nationwide trends reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

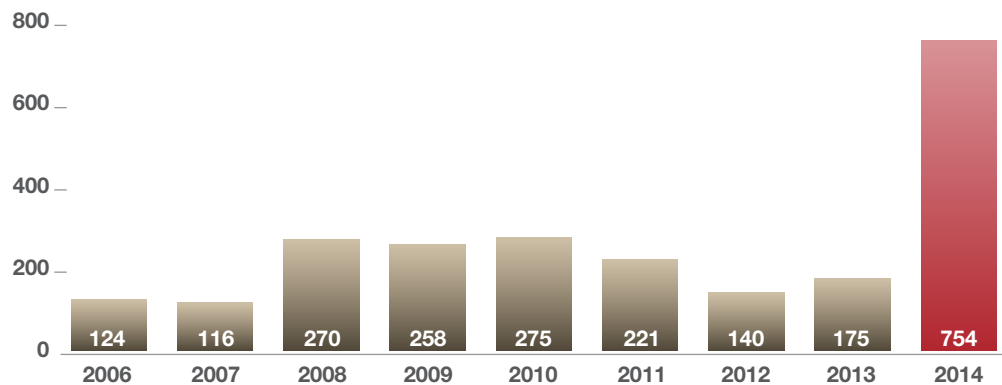
The proliferation of New York City-based heroin distributors and widespread flooding



Photo Credit: R. Umar Abbasi, Photographer

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan joins the DEA, the NYPD and the New York State Police in announcing two major heroin investigations.

### Heroin seizures (in pounds) by year: 2006–2014



In 2014, heroin seizures in SNP's cases tripled in comparison to previous years.

of markets across New York State prompted SNP to form the Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT) in late 2014. Working with dedicated teams from the New York State Police, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and other agencies, HIT focuses on cooperating with local prosecutors and law enforcement to share intelligence and resources.

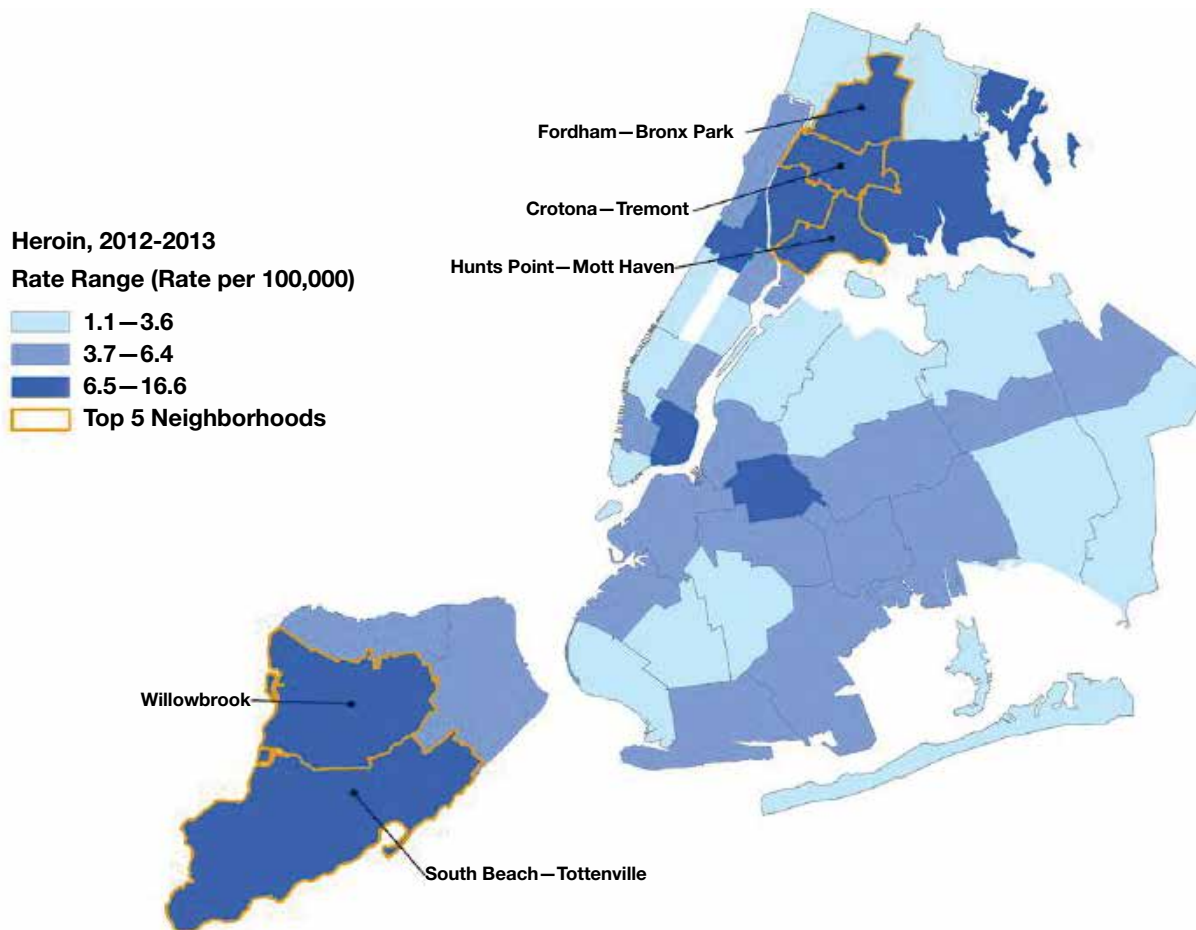
### **NYC Neighborhoods Impacted by Heroin Overdose Deaths**

While much of the heroin that arrives in New York City is bound for outside markets, city overdose death rates starkly demonstrate that plenty stays here. City residents in high-

poverty neighborhoods have the highest rates of fatal heroin overdoses. At the same time, the sharpest increases in overdoses are in the wealthiest neighborhoods. Studies show that a majority of those in the new heroin user group first developed an addiction to prescription opioid painkillers.

The Bronx has more heroin-related fatalities than any other borough. Five years ago, neighborhoods in the South Bronx were hardest hit, but now escalating overdose rates threaten to engulf the whole borough. Staten Island comes in a close second to the Bronx in heroin overdoses per capita. High death rates have also swept across Brooklyn and Queens.

### **Top five New York City neighborhoods: Rates of heroin-related overdose deaths by residence, 2012–2013**



*Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)*

## Collaborative Enforcement Efforts

Law enforcement strives to intercept heroin shipments and dismantle trafficking organizations at the highest level possible. Local trafficking groups receive bulk shipments of heroin from international suppliers. The heroin is processed and packaged for retail distribution at “mill” locations, most commonly set up in apartments in the Bronx and Upper Manhattan. These areas appeal to traffickers due to their proximity to major thoroughfares, such as Interstate 95.

Heroin is sold by local street-level organizations within New York City or transported to communities across New York State and the Northeast, where the sale price is higher. In 2014, New York City-based heroin trafficking groups transported millions of dollars in heroin to these markets.

One Bronx-based group obtained heroin from Colombian suppliers and ran loads up to Hartford, Conn. by car. DEA agents



*A Rosedale, Queens-based trucking company transported heroin cross-country.*

seized 24 kilograms of heroin (53 lbs.), over nine kilograms of cocaine (20 lbs.), \$85,000 in cash and three firearms in the Bronx and Hartford.

Another investigation focused on a Brooklyn organization trafficking in a variety of narcotics, both in New York and in

## NYC Heroin Mills: 2013 - 2014



Vermont, and engaging in a wide range of criminal money-making schemes. Members of the group dropped off drugs in Vermont and returned to Brooklyn with prostitutes.

Heroin moving through New York is highly pure and typically originates in South America, or less frequently Mexico. Shipments travel by plane, boat, truck, and parcel delivery service—increasingly passing through the hands of Mexican cartels—and are concealed in myriad ways.

These investigations remove dangerous narcotics from our communities and thereby reduce overdose deaths. Through narcotics enforcement, we address the violence associated with drug trafficking and remove firearms from the hands of criminals.

### **Doctor Sentenced to Prison for Manslaughter, Prescription Sales and Other Crimes**

In a groundbreaking case, a physician who recklessly caused the deaths of two patients

and endangered six more was sentenced to an effective minimum prison term of 10 2/3 years and a maximum of 20 years. Following a four-month trial, Dr. Stan Xuhui Li was convicted on 198 counts, including manslaughter, criminal sale of prescriptions and other crimes. Jurors heard testimony from over 70 witnesses, including relatives of patients who had died and surviving former patients who had visited Li's pain management clinic in Flushing, Queens. Li sold prescriptions to at least 20 patients at this clinic, primarily in exchange for cash. Among these patients was David Laffer, who gunned down four innocent people inside a pharmacy in Medford, Long Island and is serving a life sentence for first-degree murder. Li was charged with selling prescriptions to Laffer, but not with the pharmacy homicides. During the time the doctor operated his Queens pain management clinic, he was also employed as an anesthesiologist at a hospital in New Jersey.

## **Doctor Accused of Overprescribing Pills Is Guilty of Manslaughter**

By MONIQUE O. MABAN

A Queens doctor accused of overprescribing painkillers to two patients who later suffered fatal overdoses was convicted on Friday of two counts of second-degree manslaughter and dozens of lesser charges.

The guilty verdict against Dr. Stan Xuhui Li came after a four-month trial in State Supreme Court in Manhattan and nearly six days of jury deliberations. Prosecutors had portrayed Dr. Li as reckless in his prescribing of drugs to patients who showed clear signs of addiction. Dr. Li's lawyer had argued that his client had acted in good faith and that the patients who died overdosed because they failed to follow Dr. Li's instructions.

The jury found Dr. Li, 66, guilty of 200 of the 211 charges against him. In addition to the manslaughter counts, those charges included reckless endangerment, criminal sale of a prescription for a controlled substance and falsifying records. State Supreme Court Justice Michael R. Sonberg ordered Dr. Li held without bail until he is sentenced on Oct. 20. He faces a prison term of five to 15 years on each of the manslaughter counts.

Dr. Li, an anesthesiologist from Hamilton, N.J., ran a pain management clinic one day each weekend in Flushing, Queens, where he saw dozens of patients a day, posted a price list on the

wall for drugs that included oxycodone and Xanax and accepted payment primarily in cash.

During closing arguments, prosecutors said Dr. Li was driven by greed and ignored warnings from emergency room workers and his patients' relatives that he was placing lives at risk. His lawyer, Raymond Belair, countered that he was dealing with difficult patients, some of whom misled him about

their substance abuse problems.

The case against Dr. Li was unusual because the office of New York City's special narcotics prosecutor typically charges doctors accused of knowingly prescribing painkillers to drug abusers with criminal sale of a prescription for a controlled substance. Dr. Li was instead charged with manslaughter after Joseph Hoag and Nicholas Rappold, who were under his care, died. Though the

tactic has been used in cases in several other states, it is rare in New York.

"My office devoted more than three years and countless resources to this case because we believed that the public needed protection from criminally reckless conduct that purported to be medical treatment but resulted in loss of life, addiction and harm to patients," Bridget C. Brennan, the city's special narcotics prosecutor, said in a statement issued after the verdict was delivered.

The verdict took about 45 minutes to be read, with several jurors yawning and even dozing off as the time passed. Dr. Li sat solemnly and stared at the table in front of him, as his wife and daughter looked on, taking deep breaths, their eyes closed and their arms crossed.

Mr. Belair declined to speak with reporters and exited the courtroom through a back door with Dr. Li's family. He did not respond to several telephone calls.

Dr. Li was also convicted on six of the seven reckless endangerment charges against him, which were related to his dealings with seven patients who nearly died. Many of the other counts involved accusations that he illegally sold prescriptions to 20 other patients, including David S. Laffer, a drug addict who fatally shot four people in 2011 while stealing narcotics from a pharmacy on Long Island.



Dr. Stan Xuhui Li outside State Supreme Court in Manhattan on Friday. He was convicted of 200 of the 211 charges against him after a four-month trial.

# SNP Outreach

## Sharing Expertise with International Partners



*Police officers from Croatia participate in the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.*



*Narcotics investigators from the Supreme Prosecutor's Office, Republic of Korea, meet with SNP staff.*



*National Security officials and other dignitaries from Kazakhstan discuss crime fighting strategies.*



*Prosecutors and members of the Royal Malaysian Police discuss narcotics trends.*

## Professional Recognition



*Federal Drug Agents Foundation honors Eryck Kratville, Chief of the Heroin Interdiction Team (far right), and the DEA's Long Island Division Office Group D-14.*



*Federal Drug Agents Foundation honors Assistant District Attorney Matthew McKenzie (third from right) and the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force Group T-42.*



*Assistant District Attorney Kristin Bailey (second from left) and SNP investigators are honored by the Morris County, N.J. Prosecutor's Office.*



*Clark Abrams, Chief of the Money Laundering and Financial Investigations Unit, receives the Thomas E. Dewey Medal from the New York City Bar Association.*



*Federal Drug Agents Foundation Director Shaquille O'Neal greets Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan.*

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# Community Initiatives

A series of four youth gang forums sponsored by SNP culminated with the premiere of the documentary, “One Last Chance,” on June 9, 2014. The documentary, created by participating youth, explores the pitfalls faced by young people incarcerated for drug dealing, gang involvement and gun violence.



*Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan welcomes a panel to address alternatives to youth gang activity.*

The youth gang forums, which began in October 2012, provided a framework for young people to collaborate and address the serious problems that stem from street gangs in New York City. A cross-section of community leaders and clergy members also participated in the forums, which were presented in collaboration with Rev. Al Taylor and his organization “Man Up in Harlem.”

Co-Chiefs of SNP’s Gang Prosecution Unit kicked off the series with a discussion of the history of gang/crew activity and the office’s methods of combatting gang-

related violence and associated criminal activity on October 16, 2012. This inaugural presentation took place at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building in Harlem.

The second forum encouraged input from youth on topics such as drug dealing, gang/crew involvement and gun violence. A youth committee was formed to develop strategies for helping today’s young people meet the many challenges that confront them. This event was held on January 30, 2013 at the Infinity Mennonite Church of Harlem.

On May 16, 2013, the youth committee, which consisted primarily of members from Children’s Village, Inc., presented a formal report on their ideas for deterring gang involvement. Youth also set the goal of creating a documentary during this meeting at Convent Avenue Baptist Church.

The final forum featured the premiere of “One Last Chance,” which was directed by Vaughn Thorpe, a youth from Children’s Village, Inc., with technical assistance from Kevin Lopez, CEO of LPZ Media, LLC. The documentary was shown at the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building. Afterwards, past and present members of Children’s Village, Inc. spoke on the experiences they encountered while incarcerated and of the positive transitions they have made since that time.



*Youth from Children’s Village participated in a series of gang forums.*

# Investigation Division

2014 SNP WIRETAP ACTIVITY	
Amendment	25
Extension	78
Original	157
	260
INSTRUMENT TYPES	
Cellphone	221
Chat Accounts	26
BBM	9
Telephones	3
Email	1
	260
INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY	
Trial Division	133
Special Invest. Bureau	144
Prescription Drug	57
Narcotics Gang	4
	338



Chief of Investigations Joseph J. Tesoriero (right) meets to discuss training for the office's team of analysts.

## Special Investigations Bureau

The Special Investigations Bureau (SIB) targets major narcotics trafficking organizations, including those that import and distribute multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine and heroin. The activities of

the criminal enterprises extend beyond county, state, and international borders. SIB prosecutors work with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the New York City Police Department (NYPD), the New York State Police, the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF), the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and other local, state, federal and foreign law enforcement.

In 2014, SIB launched 155 investigations targeting a wide range of criminal activity including drug trafficking, robberies, weapons trafficking and money laundering. The bureau also commenced civil actions to forfeit narcotics proceeds. Senior staff supervised wiretap investigations involving 260 eavesdropping applications, including 157 originals, 78 extensions and 25 amendments. Narcotics investigations resulted in the seizure of approximately 625 pounds of heroin, 398 pounds of cocaine, 3,350 oxycodone pills and 37 pounds of marijuana, as well as various other drugs.

## Heroin Interdiction Team

The resurgence of heroin throughout New York State drove SNP to create the Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT) in late 2014. HIT is tasked with combating the flow of heroin to the area surrounding New York City, particularly upstate counties. Working with a dedicated team of New York State troopers, DEA agents, NYPD officers and other law enforcement officials, HIT focuses on cooperating with local prosecutors and law enforcement to share intelligence and resources to take down the organizations responsible for spreading heroin from the mills in New York City to New York State as a whole.

## **Prescription Drug Investigation Unit**

Alarming rates of prescription drug abuse and related crimes led SNP to form the Prescription Drug Investigation Unit. The unit, created in 2011, is designed to combat the proliferation of prescription narcotics on the black market by investigating and prosecuting the criminal distribution of these drugs. Prosecutions target a range of subjects, from members of street level drug organizations to doctors and pharmacists engaged in the criminal sale of prescriptions or pills. Armed robberies of pharmacies, shootings, home invasions and other violent crimes are also associated with prescription drug diversion. The unit works closely with the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement, the NYPD and the DEA, among other law enforcement agencies.

## **Narcotics Gang Unit**

The Narcotics Gang Unit was established in 2002. It concentrates on violent neighborhood gangs, robbery crews, and weapons traffickers committing drug-related criminal activity across the city. The unit works closely with detectives from the NYPD's Gang Division, Narcotics Division and Precinct members. The unit has developed expertise in the use of new technologies and collecting evidence through social media, such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. In addition to narcotics trafficking, the unit also prosecuted murder and murder conspiracy, assault, armed robbery, kidnapping, burglary, weapons possession and illegal firearms sales.

## **Money Laundering and Financial Investigations Unit**

The Money Laundering and Financial Investigations Unit was initiated in 2001, and

reconfigured in 2005 and 2008. It investigates narcotics-related money laundering and other financial criminal activity. Cases are generated from multiple sources, including intelligence developed during narcotics investigations. The unit aims to prevent foreign drug trafficking organizations from repatriating drug proceeds through smuggling, as well as through the use of the financial system and international trade; and local drug organizations from benefiting from illicit profits.

## **Forfeiture Investigations**

Established more than 25 years ago, the Forfeiture Investigations Unit evaluates felony drug prosecutions for potential civil litigation to recover proceeds of narcotics crimes. The unit works closely with law enforcement—on the federal, state and local levels—in identifying criminal assets to deprive narcotics traffickers and money-laundering groups of the profits of criminality. The unit has in place a comprehensive set of systems to track office participation in investigations resulting in forfeiture actions. In 2014, 315 federal forfeiture actions were initiated and 290 were completed. At the state level, 393 actions were initiated and 412 were completed.

## **Case Highlights**

### **Narcotic Street Gangs**

Violent neighborhood street gangs have had a destabilizing effect on our most vulnerable communities. Groups of teens and young adults are at war with one another over territory and status, showing little regard for the innocent lives jeopardized by public gun battles. Crews fund illegal gun purchases and other criminal activity by selling narcotics.

In 2014, a close collaboration between SNP's Gang Prosecutions Unit, the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office and the NYPD resulted in the arrest of 16 members and

associates of a gang called “GS9” and the seizure of 21 firearms. Based in East Flatbush, the gang’s reach extended throughout the city and to Miami, Fla. During the investigation, members of the NYPD’s Brooklyn South Violence Reduction Task Force probed nearly two-dozen shootings.

Photo Credit: WPIX



Guns seized from members of GS9.

A 101-count indictment charged members of the group in connection with 14 of these shootings, including a homicide in a bodega in Brooklyn. On several occasions, members of the gang fired shots into crowds of bystanders in Brooklyn and Miami. Money from narcotics sales funded the purchase of firearms and other criminal activity.

On December 17, 2014, NYPD officers arrested eight defendants in the vicinity of Quad Recording Studios at 723 7th Avenue in Manhattan, including Ackquille Pollard, aka “Bobby Shmurda,” and Chad Marshall, aka “Rowdy Rebel.” These two individuals and a number of their codefendants also perform as a rap group under the name “GS9.” Additional defendants were arrested elsewhere in the city and in Miami, while two were incarcerated outside of New York State.

## Rap Artist Arraigned in Manhattan on Violent Crime Counts

By JAMES C. MCKINLEY Jr.

When Bobby Shmurda and his group GS9 took the stage for Power 105’s annual concert at the Barclays Center in late October, it was an important moment for the promising rap artist from Brooklyn. And critics said he carried it off, performing his smash hit “Hot Boy” with a hard, muscular style, as tough as asphalt.

Prosecutors now say his on-stage persona is more than an act.

The rapper, whose real name is Ackquille Pollard, was arraigned in State Supreme Court in Manhattan on Thursday along with a dozen other alleged members of the GS9 group, accused of operating a violent street gang linked to a murder and several shootings.

“There is no question that Ackquille Pollard is the driving force behind the GS9 gang and the organizing figure within this conspiracy,” said Nigel Farina, a prosecutor, speaking at his arraignment.

The indictment paints a picture of a local Brooklyn street gang that nurtured two successful rap artists — Mr. Shmurda and Rowdy Rebel — even as its members were selling drugs and engaging in gunfights with other gangs.

The indictment links members of Mr. Shmurda’s entourage to the murder of a rival gang member in a bodega in Brooklyn, the near-fatal shooting of an innocent woman, a gunfight outside the Brooklyn Criminal Courts Building and another shooting near a nightclub in Miami. It also accuses the group of conspiring to sell crack cocaine.

Much of the violence stemmed from a dispute between GS9 and other street gangs in East Flatbush, including Folk Nation and Brooklyn’s Most Wanted, prosecutors and investigators said.

Mr. Shmurda’s lawyer, Howard Greenberg, said the indictment was mostly “a worthless piece of paper.” He said there was little evidence to link his client to violent acts beyond the statements of unreliable co-conspirators. “He’s famous,” Mr. Greenberg said. “He’s rich. You think he’s going to do this stuff?”

Justice James Burke set bail at \$2 million apiece for Mr. Shmurda and Rowdy Rebel, a 23-year-old whose given name is Chad Marshall. Both men have signed lucrative contracts with Epic

Records, which has agreed to guarantee their bail, their lawyers said. Neither man had posted bail by Thursday night. The 11 other defendants named in the indictment were arraigned and sent to Rikers Island. All of the defendants pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Shmurda became an overnight hip-hop star when a video of “Hot Boy” went viral on the Internet and rose to No. 8 on the Billboard chart. It sparked a dance craze called the “Shmoney.” That led to the deal with Epic Records, which released his first EP in November.

But Bridget G. Brennan, the city’s special narcotics prosecutor, said the GS9 gang — the name is short of G Stone Crips — had been under investigation for almost two years and derived its income from selling crack.

Much of the evidence against the defendants, prosecutors said, came from recorded calls made by inmates at Rikers during which gang members discussed drug deals and shootings.

The case was built largely on physical evidence, including ballistics and DNA evidence, surveillance videos, eyewitness testimony and recorded phone conversations. Police also examined text messages, social media postings and photos for corroborating evidence.

Charges include Conspiracy, Murder, Attempted Murder, Assault, Attempted Assault, Weapons Possession, Criminal Use of a Firearm, Reckless Endangerment, Narcotics Sales and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia.

### Millions of Dollars in Heroin Seized from Bronx Packaging Mill and Vehicle

Agents dismantled a heroin trafficking operation and seized approximately 10 kilograms (over 22 lbs.) packaged for street-level distribution. The organization, which operated a heroin mill on Boynton Avenue in the Bronx, marketed its product under a variety of brand names, including “Prada,” “Audi,” “Pinky Dinky” and “Sin City,” that were stamped onto user-ready glassine envelopes. Members of the DEA’s Drug Enforcement Task Force were conducting surveillance of the suspected drug location when they saw a subject place a heavily weighted laundry bag into the trunk of a car driven by another individual. Agents stopped the car with both men inside and recovered multiple brick-shaped packages wrapped in magazine paper, each containing numerous individual glassine envelopes. The envelopes were estimated to hold approximately seven kilograms (15 lbs.) of heroin. Further investigation revealed the bag of heroin had come from Apt. 3B in 1049 Boynton Ave. Upon entering the apartment, agents detained five more individuals and seized another three kilograms of heroin, most of which had been packaged in a similar fashion to that found in the vehicle.



*Heroin with a street value of approximately \$2.5 million was seized in the Bronx. Mill workers wrote names on the masks they wore while processing heroin.*

### “Good Guys” Trucking Company Transports Heroin Cross-Country

The owner of a Queens trucking company called “Good Guys Transport Corp.” and a driver were arrested for smuggling 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of heroin from California to Hauppauge, Long Island inside a tractor trailer. The pair was apprehended by agents with the DEA’s New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, who found heroin concealed in a “trap,” or hidden compartment, on the back wall of the truck’s cab. Heroin was pressed into rectangular blocks or formed into the shape of shoe soles. The driver allegedly picked up the 15 kilograms of heroin in Riverside, Calif. and paid an individual there \$750,000 cash before transporting the load back to New York.



*Photo credit: R. Umar Abbasi, Photographer*

*A Queens-based tractor trailer outfitted with secret compartments transported heroin from California to Long Island. International traffickers frequently use hollowed out shoes to smuggle heroin.*

Agents also recovered more than \$300,000 cash from the home of the trucking company owner and from a safe deposit box.

### **\$11 Million Heroin Shipment Seized: New York to New England**

A scheme to smuggle narcotics from Colombia to Connecticut via New York was disrupted. DEA agents recovered approximately 24 kilograms of heroin (53 lbs.), over nine kilograms of cocaine (20 lbs.), \$85,000 in cash and three firearms in related searches in the Bronx and Hartford, Conn. Seven defendants were indicted, including two New York-based traffickers whom agents tracked as they drove from the Bronx to Hartford, where they delivered approximately 10 kilograms of heroin. Also charged were two individuals who flew to Colombia to negotiate the sale of the heroin, the primary supplier for the Connecticut group, and an individual in Connecticut who received the heroin. An additional 13 kilograms of heroin was recovered from a Hartford apartment. Quantities of heroin and nine kilograms of cocaine were seized in the Bronx.

### **Manhattan Hospital's Pharmacy Director Stole Millions of Dollars in Pain Pills**

A pharmacy director for Beth Israel Medical Center was indicted and arrested in the theft of millions of dollars in highly addictive narcotic painkillers from the hospital. Anthony D'Alessandro used his position at Beth Israel, where he worked for over 14 years, to steal nearly 200,000 pills of oxycodone. The pills carried an estimated street value of \$5.6 million. In carrying out the scheme, D'Alessandro removed medication from a vault and made false entries into the hospital's electronic narcotics inventory system in an attempt to cover his tracks.

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New York Post, Wednesday, July 9, 2014

nypost.com

# HOSP'S Rx BOSS SHOCK

## \$5.6M narc bust

By REBECCA ROSENBERG

The former chief pharmacist at Beth Israel Hospital was arrested Tuesday in the theft of \$5.6 million in painkillers that prosecutors believe ended up on the black market, authorities said.

Anthony D'Alessandro, who was the hospital's pharmacy director for 14 years, was busted at his home on Staten Island.

He allegedly had stolen nearly 193,000 oxycodone pills from January 2009 until he was fired this past spring.

He swapped pills on 220 different occasions, prosecutors said.

D'Alessandro (inset, in court Tuesday) usually took about 100 at a time in the early days of the scheme, but had ramped it up to 1,500 a pop by the end, prosecutors said.

D'Alessandro, 47, was led into a Manhattan courtroom by two detectives, his hands cuffed behind him, wearing glasses, black T-shirt and gray exercise shorts.

"The astounding volume of narcotics in this case is consistent with a drug seller, not a drug user," said Assistant Manhattan DA Ryan Sakacs.

"If the defendant consumed all these pills, we'd be at his funeral and not his arraignment."

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan's office is still trying to trace where the pills landed, but investigators believe the narcotics ended up on the street.

"This case underscores the vigilance required when addictive medication with a high resale value is readily available — even to licensed professionals and trusted employees," Brennan said.

D'Alessandro allegedly created a fake paper trail for the missing pills, by claiming they were sent to a research pharmacy within the First Avenue hospital.

The research pharmacy wasn't doing any studies on oxycodone at the time, and staffers were not aware of the phony requisitions, authorities said.

He met with investigators on April 11 and came clean about the faux research project, prosecutors said.

D'Alessandro pleaded not guilty and he was held in lieu of \$500,000 bail.

D'Alessandro, married with two kids, aged 14 and 12, has no incentive to jump bail, according to his defense.

Additional reporting by David K. Li

New York Post, July 9, 2014

He indicated that the medication was being sent to the research pharmacy at the hospital, when in fact he used the pills for criminal activity. The theft came to light following a merger of Mount Sinai Medical Center and Continuum Health Partners, Beth Israel's former parent company.

## Rikers Island Correction Officers Indicted on Narcotics and Bribery Charges

Three current and former Rikers Island Correction Officers were arrested on charges of conspiracy, narcotics possession, bribery and the smuggling of contraband as a result of an undercover investigation by the city's Department of Investigation and the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force. The Correction Officers allegedly transported contraband, including what they

believed to be oxycodone pills, into Rikers Island Correctional Facility for a price. Two of the officers, Steven Dominguez and Divine Rahming, were also accused of conspiring to traffic in cocaine outside of the jail.

During the probe, the Correction Officers received contraband and payment for introducing the contraband into the jail from undercover investigators, who posed as friends and family members of inmates. Dominguez and Rahming were charged together with an inmate and the inmate's

## Drug Smuggling Charges For Rikers Island Officers

By MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ  
and MICHAEL WINERIP

Two New York City correction officers and a former officer who resigned this year have been arrested on charges that they smuggled prescription pills and other contraband into Rikers Island, the authorities said on Tuesday.

The arrests came after a five-month sting operation by several city and federal agencies that involved undercover officers, wiretaps, fake drugs and hundreds of dollars in so-called courier fees paid to the officers for ferrying narcotics into one of the nation's largest jails.

"By smuggling drugs into a correctional institution, they undermined the security of everyone at Rikers Island — inmates, officers and staff," said Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's special narcotics prosecutor, who helped lead the investigation.

Between Feb. 25 and June 23, the three officers each met with people they believed to be friends and relatives of inmates at Rikers, but who were actually undercover investigators from the Department of Investigation, officials said. The investigators arranged for the officers to bring what they believed to be oxycodone pills — they were fake — into the jail in exchange for payments from \$500 to \$900, the authorities said.

The two correction officers, Steven Dominguez, 26, and Infinite Divine Rahming, 30, were arraigned in State Supreme Court in Manhattan on Tuesday on charges including conspiracy, bribery and drug possession. The former guard, Deleon Gifth, who

resigned in April for reasons unrelated to the case, was arrested on Monday on similar charges.

Both Mr. Dominguez and Mr. Rahming were also caught in a separate Department of Investigation undercover operation offering to help provide protection for the transportation of cocaine outside the jail, officials said.

And Mr. Rahming accepted \$500 in exchange for delivering two packages of wrapped tobacco to an inmate, they said.

In addition to the criminal charges, the Department of Investigation, which initiated the sting operation, requested internal disciplinary action — including termination, demotion and suspension — for a captain and three other correction officers accused of involvement in contraband smuggling.

One of the guards had sent text messages indicating he knew of the smuggling operation, according to investigators. Another was found to have moved inmates at their request so they could meet with fellow inmates and make personal phone calls.

Officials from the New York Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and the Internal Revenue Service were also involved in the investigation.

Joseph Ponte, the correction commissioner, said his department had cooperated fully with the investigation.

The undercover operation comes amid a cascade of revelations involving neglect, abuse and corruption at Rikers Island

that appears to be endemic. In February, a homeless veteran died after being left in an overheated cell. Four months earlier another inmate died after he was locked in his cell, unattended, for several days. He was found naked and covered in feces. An investigation by The New York Times this month revealed a culture of brutality in which inmates, particularly those with mental illnesses, routinely suffered severe injuries in assaults by correction officers.

The smuggling of contraband has been a continuing problem that has worsened as violence at the jail complex has surged. Mark Peters, the commissioner of the Department of Investigation, said recently in an interview that he favored a stricter screening process for correction officers entering the jails at the start of each shift.

Officials say that guards, inmates and visitors smuggle in narcotics, tobacco and weapons, which fetch exorbitant payments inside. On a Rikers cellblock, it is not unusual for a single cigarette to go for more than \$20.

Norman Seabrook, president of the correction officers' union, said there was a need to bring security measures "into the 21st

century"; he is meeting with Mr. Peters next week to discuss ways to reduce smuggling.

Mr. Dominguez and Mr. Rahming were originally arrested on June 23, when they were caught at Rikers with more than eight ounces of cocaine. They have been in jail since then. On Tuesday, the two men appeared in court dressed in street clothes and pleaded not guilty to the additional charges. They were ordered held on \$500,000 bond or \$250,000 cash bail. Mr. Gifth, who was arrested on Monday, was ordered held on \$100,000 bond or \$50,000 cash.

Investigators say that Mr. Dominguez and Mr. Rahming also worked with the girlfriend of an inmate to smuggle drugs. The girlfriend, Yasel Suarez, met with an undercover investigator and received what she thought was oxycodone, then delivered it to Mr. Dominguez to bring onto Rikers Island.

Ms. Suarez was also arrested on Monday and ordered held without bail. Her boyfriend, George Ramos, who is serving a sentence in state prison, was arraigned on charges stemming from the contraband scheme on Tuesday.

Both Mr. Dominguez and Mr. Rahming, who have been held at Rikers since late June, are listed on the jail's website as inmates, but there is no information about where in the jail complex they are being held. Correction officials said that was for their security.

**A contraband problem has been worsening with more violence at the jail.**

girlfriend. A second indictment charged former Correction Officer Deleon Gifth with committing similar crimes separately. Gifth resigned prior to his arrest.

Additionally, Dominguez and Rahming are charged with agreeing to transport cocaine in a deal struck outside of the jail. During a meeting with an undercover DEA agent, Dominguez offered his services for drug deliveries and stated that he had a badge and a gun. After successfully delivering cocaine to another undercover agent, Dominguez offered to involve Rahming in future transactions. The pair was arrested at a subsequent meeting with an undercover DEA agent in a Bronx parking lot, where they possessed over eight ounces of cocaine.

### **NYPD Officer Charged with Providing Protection for Narcotics Conspiracy**

New York City Police Officer Merlin Alston was arrested on conspiracy and official misconduct charges for allegedly participating in drug sales, serving as a driver for a narcotics trafficker and providing protection. In one instance, Alston armed himself with a shotgun supplied by a drug trafficker and watched over a narcotics related meeting from a nearby vehicle. Alston also assisted drug dealers in avoiding police by warning them about nearby enforcement activities. The indictment charges that Alston committed these crimes between June 2010 and October 2014, while he was assigned to the NYPD's 46th Precinct.

### **Two Women Arrested with over \$5 Million in Heroin in Vehicle**

Approximately 20 kilograms of heroin (44 lbs.), including nearly half a million user-ready envelopes, were seized in the West Bronx as a result of a long-term investigation by the DEA. Agents conducting surveillance

on a suspected heroin packaging operation in the vicinity of Creston Avenue observed two female subjects enter a van, one of them carrying a large duffle bag. The van drove off in an erratic manner and one of the women could be seen motioning towards the rear cargo area. The van entered a parking garage and the women were stopped leaving the vehicle. Agents found the keys still in the ignition and the duffle bag inside the van. The bag contained four shrink-wrapped bricks, each consisting of approximately 25,000 glassine envelopes of heroin. Another 15 shrink-wrapped bricks of glassines and a kilogram of loose heroin were recovered from a hidden compartment in the cargo area of the vehicle.



*Agents tracked two female drug traffickers and retrieved bricks of heroin from inside a hidden compartment.*

### **International Narcotics Ring Dismantled: Drugs Funneled to NYC and Long Island**

A multi-million dollar drug pipeline from Mexico to New York City and Long Island funneled heroin, cocaine, MDMA and steroids into the metropolitan area. Nine defendants from Mexico, California, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens were indicted as a result of an investigation by SNP, the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, the DEA's Drug Enforcement Task Force and the Nassau County Police Department. Cesar Romero-

Astudillo, a Bronx resident also known as “Menor,” is accused of running the trafficking network and is charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker under New York State’s kingpin statute. Narcotics were smuggled out of Mexico inside vehicles and transported in airplanes by “swallowers” who ingested packaged heroin. Heroin, cocaine, MDMA and steroids were also sold via Craigslist.



*Kilos of heroin were recovered from an SUV’s engine manifold in Warren County, N.J.*

### **New York and Pennsylvania Suppliers Arrested: Heroin and “Crystal Meth”**

Six drug traffickers were charged in connection with schemes to distribute narcotics in New York and Pennsylvania following a long term investigation. The head of the organization, Gustavo Adolfo Solis, aka “Chili,” was arrested after placing nearly a pound of heroin inside the trunk of a car in Flushing, Queens. The heroin was concealed in a baby wipes container

that Solis carried inside a Babies “R” Us shopping bag. Solis had picked up the heroin at an associate’s apartment. DEA agents arrested this associate and his wife, who face charges for allowing the heroin to remain in the residence with their baby. Earlier in the investigation, agents seized over three pounds of methamphetamine, also known as “crystal meth,” from a vehicle. The driver, a drug dealer from Pennsylvania, had just left a meeting with Solis and a female associate in Brooklyn. Investigators believe the “crystal meth” originated in Mexico. SNP conducted the investigation with the DEA and the Kings County District Attorney’s Office.



*Heroin was concealed inside a baby wipes container.*

### **Money Launderer Sentenced to Prison: Drug Residue Links Cash to Narcotics**

As a result of an investigation by SNP’s Money Laundering and Financial Investigations Unit and the El Dorado Task Force, Salvador Fernandez was sentenced to an aggregate prison term of 10 to 21 years for drug possession, money laundering and other charges. Fernandez was arrested in May 2011 while in the process of laundering approximately \$200,000. During a search of his apartment, investigators recovered an additional \$60,000, one pound of cocaine, drug ledgers that reflected the sale of multiple kilograms and the laundering of

nearly \$1 million, and drug paraphernalia. Fernandez admitted that he invested commissions earned from his money laundering operation in a side business of buying and selling cocaine.

Days after posting bail, Fernandez was discovered laundering an additional \$145,000 and he quickly fled the U.S. Months later, he was captured while flying from Colombia to Mexico. In January 2014, Fernandez went on trial in New York. An expert witness interpreted his drug and money ledgers, and explained how entries on the money ledgers reflected use of the Black Market Peso Exchange, a sophisticated money laundering method. Another expert described conducting scientific tests on the seized currency for traces of narcotic drug residue. Evidence of the drug residue



*For the first time in New York State Courts, drug residue on cash linked the laundered money to the narcotics trade.*

on the currency was critical to proving that the currency was the proceeds of narcotics activity. This was the first time a New York State Court admitted expert testimony about trace drug contamination on currency.

## **Adult Entertainers and Club Manager Drug and Defraud Victims**



*New York Post, June 12, 2014*

Four female adult entertainers and a club manager were arrested for stealing \$200,000 from wealthy men in a plot that involved drugging the victims. The investigation, which was conducted by the DEA's Tactical Diversion Squad and the NYPD, revealed that the defendants worked together to identify victims and transport these victims to strip clubs in Manhattan and Queens once they were drugged and incapacitated. The victims' credit cards were charged without their consent. The scheme was carried out at RoadHouse NYC Gentlemen's Club in Queens and Scores New York in Manhattan, as well as high-end hotels and restaurants in the metropolitan area. Charges in the indictment included grand larceny, conspiracy, assault, forgery and tampering with physical evidence.

# Trial Division

2014 SNP WORKLOAD	
Arrests	1902
Indictments/SCI	1228
Trials	34
<b>FELONY DISPOSITIONS</b>	
Convicted	1112
Acquitted	9
Dismissed	82
Treatment Dismissals	82
<b>FELONY SENTENCES</b>	
State Prison	534
City Jail	255
Probation	183
City Jail & Probation	46
<b>SEIZURES</b>	
Cocaine	511 lbs.
Heroin	754 lbs.
Oxycodone	5,617 pills
Marijuana	189 lbs.
Guns	109

Trial Division Assistant District Attorneys handle the bulk of the drug felony arrests referred to the office for prosecution. They are assigned to one of the two bureaus that comprise the Trial Division. Each bureau is headed by a Chief and Deputy Chief who supervise assistants as they provide legal advice and draw up court orders, including search and arrest warrants, on a 24-hour basis.

Assistants work closely with the NYPD's Narcotics Division, the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, the Port Authority Police, the New York State Police, the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement and the SNP Investigators Unit. In 2014, the division launched 133 new investigations. A total of 1,702 complaints were referred to the office for prosecution during the year; 1,228

defendants were indicted. Search warrants drafted numbered 853.

## Case Highlights

### Ringleader of Citywide Drug Trafficking Group and 11 Others Arrested: 3 Guns

The head of a sprawling drug trafficking organization was among 12 charged in a plot to sell large quantities of cocaine and heroin in New York and Connecticut. The group received shipments of narcotics from a supplier in Puerto Rico, among other sources, and maintained stash locations in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens. The NYPD's yearlong wiretap investigation, dubbed "Operation Rebound," focused on Carlos Medina, a federal parolee who had been convicted on federal conspiracy, drug and firearm charges in 1986. Medina falsely told parole officers he earned a legitimate living through a jewelry store he owned on West 47th Street in Manhattan. Meanwhile he repeatedly travelled to Puerto Rico to set up drug shipments and personally made three narcotics sales to undercover officers. Court authorized searches in New York City yielded two firearms, including one found inside a hidden trap in a Jacuzzi alongside several kilograms of cocaine and heroin.



*A New York City-based drug trafficker met with suppliers in Puerto Rico and oversaw stash locations in Manhattan, the Bronx and Queens.*

Supplier Ramon Delgado was arrested in Puerto Rico, where he remains in custody pending extradition. An additional firearm and over \$90,000 cash were seized during that arrest.

## Four Indicted in Bulk Sales of Narcotics and Guns

A drug and gun trafficker from New Jersey was arrested along with three others as a result of an undercover investigation by the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Manhattan South. Fiore Caruso, aka "Phil," and his co-defendants were charged in connection with 12 sales to undercover officers, including 500 grams of cocaine priced at \$23,000 and nine firearms that sold for \$16,800. Meetings with the undercover officers took place near two Starbucks

coffee shops in the East Village section of Manhattan, including the busy Astor Place location, among other places. Caruso and a codefendant were arrested on charges contained in an indictment after exiting a vehicle in New Jersey. Police seized \$13,000 cash and quantities of cocaine, oxycodone and other pills during the arrests. Additional quantities of drugs, including approximately 5,000 pills, and \$2,500 cash were seized from an apartment Caruso controlled in Weehawken, N.J.

## Prominent Dermatologist Charged in Rx Drug Fraud

Manhattan dermatologist Cheryl Karcher was arrested at her Park Avenue medical office for obtaining narcotic painkillers through illegal prescriptions. Karcher allegedly wrote prescriptions for Percocet, Adderall and other drugs in the names of her patients and others without their knowledge or consent.

She filled prescriptions at local pharmacies after convincing the pharmacists that her intention was to deliver the pills to her patients. Karcher was charged in connection with 15 prescriptions filled between February 2010 and November 2012. DEA agents conducted a court authorized search of her office at the time of the arrest. An indictment charged Karcher with drug possession, prescription sales, falsifying business records and fraud.

### Mob guy in gun bust

A REPUTED Gambino associate from New Jersey whose ex-wife starred on "I Married a Mobster" was busted in a cocaine and gun distribution ring, authorities and sources said.

Fiore (Phil) Caruso, 59, personally met with an undercover cop on six occasions and sold drugs and two weapons, according to the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan.

Caruso, of Weehawken, N.J., was ordered held without bail at his arraignment in Manhattan Supreme Court on Friday on charges including conspiracy. John Ennis, 28, Berenice Albarán, 25, and John Contreras, 39, are also charged. **Shayna Jacobs**

Daily News,  
December 19, 2014

## Prescription Fraud Charges For Prominent Dermatologist

By JAMES C. MCKINLEY Jr.

A Manhattan dermatologist often quoted in magazines and on television was arrested on Wednesday at her Park Avenue office on charges she wrote fake prescriptions for painkillers, using the names of her patients, filled them at pharmacies and kept the pills for her own benefit.

The dermatologist, Dr. Cheryl Karcher, 56, pleaded not guilty in State Supreme Court in Manhattan to multiple charges in a 50-count indictment, including drug possession, selling prescriptions, falsifying business records and fraud. Justice Larry Stephen released her on the condition that she surrender her passport.

A prosecutor, Jeffrey Linehan, told the court that Dr. Karcher had used the names of former patients on prescriptions for drugs like Percocet, then took them to three "mom and pop pharmacies" where she persuaded pharmacists to fill them, promising she would personally deliver the pills to her patients.

She filled at least 15 prescriptions on seven dates from February 2010 to November 2012, obtaining hundreds of pills, court papers said. The indictment did not say if she used the pills herself, gave them to others or sold them; it did not offer a motive.

"Dr. Karcher has possessed hundreds, if not thousands, of Percocets, Klonopin and other drugs over the past three years, drugs she obtained through fraud," Mr. Linehan said at Dr. Karcher's arraignment.

Investigators executed a search warrant on Wednesday at Dr. Karcher's office in the Sadick Dermatology group, at 911 Park Avenue, between 79th and 80th Streets. The indictment stemmed from a joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Agency and



Dr. Cheryl Karcher waiting outside court in Manhattan.

New York City's special narcotics prosecutor.

Mr. Linehan said the investigation was continuing. "There could be at least another dozen victims of Dr. Karcher's prescription fraud," he said.

Dr. Karcher remained silent as she left court. Her lawyer, Charles Clayman, said she would fight the charges. "Dr. Karcher is a very well-known, very well-respected doctor, very dedicated doctor, beloved by a lot of her patients," he said. "We understand the seriousness of this matter — she certainly does — but we're prepared to defend it vigorously."

The doctor appears frequently in fashion magazines and on television, having developed a reputation as a quotable and photogenic expert on the latest cosmetic procedures and treatments.

On the Sadick Dermatology website, her online biography, which was taken down on Wednesday, refers to her as "a nationally recognized expert in aesthetic medicine."

New York Times, July 10, 2014

### **Brooklyn Doctor Peddled Painkiller Rx's to Drug Dealer**

A Brooklyn doctor was indicted for conspiring to sell hundreds of oxycodone prescriptions to a drug trafficker over the course of four years. The drug dealer made frequent visits to Dr. Schiller Desgrottes and obtained oxycodone prescriptions in at least 19 different names. Between 2010 and 2014, Desgrottes allegedly sold 227 prescriptions at \$200 per prescription, netting more than \$45,000 in illegal cash payments. Prescriptions were filled at pharmacies in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and would have yielded nearly 41,000 pills worth approximately \$700,000 on the black market. Members of the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force arrested Desgrottes at his home in Dix Hills, Long Island. He had been licensed to practice medicine in New York State for more than 34 years.

### **\$1 Million Cocaine Seizure in Williamsburg Traffic Stop**

A routine traffic stop in Williamsburg, Brooklyn led to the seizure of seven kilograms of cocaine (15 lbs.) with a street value of over \$1 million. Brian Espinal was pulled over on Meserole Street while driving a Toyota Camry with defective lights. Upon running his license, officers learned that Espinal had an open arrest warrant for a previous ticket and they detained him. Detecting the smell of marijuana, the officers conducted a search and found Espinal had small quantities of marijuana and cocaine on his person. The seven kilograms of cocaine was recovered from inside the trunk. Over \$8,000 cash was also seized from the vehicle. A year later, while charges against Espinal were still pending, he was re-arrested by the Broward County Sheriff's Office in

Sunrise, Fla. in a drug case involving an NYPD officer. Authorities in Florida charge that Espinal and the officer, Philip LeRoy, partnered to purchase 10 kilograms (over 22 lbs.) of cocaine on Dec. 1, 2014 from an undercover officer. Espinal had nearly \$200,000 in his possession at the time that he and LeRoy were arrested. Espinal pled guilty to charges in Florida, where he remains in custody.



*Over \$1 million in cocaine and \$8,000 cash was seized by NYPD officers during a routine traffic stop in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.*

### **Over \$1 Million in Heroin Seized from Bronx Packaging Mill**

DEA agents uncovered a large-scale heroin mill on Wallace Avenue in the Bronx, where drug workers were in the process of packaging more than three kilograms of heroin (8 lbs.) for retail distribution. The packaging mill, located in a fifth floor apartment, contained approximately two and one-half kilograms of bulk heroin and 30,000 individual-dose glassine envelopes of heroin that had already been filled and stamped with brand names, including "NFL" and "iPhone." Also inside the apartment were thousands of empty envelopes and all of the equipment necessary to process heroin. Prior to the

search, agents conducting surveillance at the building observed a subject enter with bags and leave empty-handed. As they stopped this individual for questioning, another subject crawled out of a fifth floor window onto a fire escape and attempted to flee. Agents entered the apartment through this same window.



*Drug traffickers hid supplies in an oven.*

## **“Nagle Boyzz” Round-the-Clock Drug Operation Dismantled in Manhattan**

Twelve leaders and members of the “Nagle Boyzz” gang were arrested for running a 24-hour cocaine and pill trafficking operation in the Inwood section of Manhattan. The 14-month undercover NYPD investigation revealed that members of the Nagle Boyzz did brisk business in the vicinity of 176 Nagle Ave., a block that became notorious for drug dealing. Sales took place in the lobbies and stairwells of apartment buildings, generating community complaints. The hierarchical crew was run by a boss, Remiguez Sanchez, and three mid-level managers who took turns overseeing eight-hour shifts. Sanchez and the three shift managers have since pled guilty to drug and conspiracy charges.



*Members of the Nagle Boyzz drug gang posted Instagram photos of themselves with firearms and flashing gang signs.*

# Alternative Sentencing Division

For addicted criminal offenders, an effective drug treatment program can mean the difference between repeated terms of imprisonment and the ability to lead a productive, law-abiding life. Yet it is not enough to simply conquer addiction. To begin anew, recovering drug users require skills gained through academic and vocational training, along with supportive counseling. The Alternative Sentencing Division has successfully worked with thousands of addicted criminal defendants over the past two decades to provide them with the tools they need to permanently close the door on crime and dependence.

Through SNP's pioneering Drug Treatment Alternatives to Prison (DTAP) programs, highly experienced staff members evaluate offenders to identify those who are likely to reap the benefits of treatment. Eligible candidates are given the opportunity to enter an appropriate program, most often at a long-term residential facility, instead of going to prison. SNP also refers eligible offenders with co-occurring substance use and mental illness disorders to the Manhattan Mental Health Court to provide integrated substance use and mental health treatment.

Residential programs typically last for at least one year and are followed by an additional term of supervision. Offenders who

are employed and have strong community ties may be placed into short-term residential programs or, in rare cases, directly into intensive outpatient treatment programs. When offenders enter treatment, their sentences are deferred. Upon successful completion, charges may be dismissed. However, failure to abide by the rules of a program can result in a sanction. If offenders commit a new crime, their original prison sentence may be imposed.

Since October 2009, judges are authorized to place defendants in a court sponsored diversion program. Although a judge determines which addicted felony offenders qualify for these programs, and court staff supervises them, SNP continues to offer its expertise in the screening and monitoring of diverted defendants.



*Alternative Sentencing Division staff evaluates and monitors candidates for drug treatment.*

SNP DEFENDANTS ENTERING TREATMENT 2005-2013										
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>DTAP</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>MTC</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Diversion</b>					<b>18</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Total Treatment</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Indictments/SCI</b>	<b>2424</b>	<b>2178</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>1703</b>	<b>1595</b>	<b>1376</b>	<b>1293</b>	<b>1373</b>	<b>1364</b>	<b>1228</b>
<b>% Indictments/SCI diverted</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>

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# Investigators Unit

The Special Narcotics Investigators Unit works with federal and state law enforcement agencies throughout the five boroughs of New York City. During 2014, the unit opened 35 new investigations, resulting in 152 arrests. Of those, 82 were charged with top felony narcotics counts and 32 with violations of money laundering laws. As a result of those arrests, 65 kilograms of cocaine (over 143 lbs.), 89 kilograms of heroin (195 lbs.) and 18 handguns were seized. The unit and its DEA and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) partners were involved in 21 money laundering investigations that yielded cash seizures totaling millions of dollars in narcotics trafficking proceeds.

Created in 1992, the unit develops narcotics cases targeting local, national and international trafficking groups, as well as trafficking over the Internet and prescription drug-related investigations. A team within the unit has expertise in identifying and dismantling major heroin organizations within New York City. These investigators provide crucial leadership in collaborative efforts with law enforcement partners.

## Tricked-Out Apartment in Manhattan Yields \$12 Million in Heroin

A typical case handled by the unit involved the seizure of 20 kilograms (nearly 45 lbs.) of heroin worth approximately \$12 million from a sophisticated drug organization

headquartered in Washington Heights. A stash location at 111 Wadsworth Avenue provided easy access to transportation routes such as the George Washington Bridge and I-95. In a pair of court authorized searches, investigators and DEA agents found bricks of heroin hidden in multiple secret compartments or “traps” built into walls and furniture.

## Longtime Fugitive Convicted in 1999 Slaying of Manhattan Man

The unit played a key role in bringing a longtime fugitive to justice for the 1999 murder of a Manhattan man, who was shot and killed in front of his family during a botched kidnapping. Miguel De Los Santos was convicted at trial and sentenced to 25 years to life in prison in December. Jurors heard evidence that De Los Santos and a group of drug traffickers targeted the victim in a narcotics-related dispute involving the victim’s cousin. De Los Santos and his henchmen suspected the cousin had cheated them on a cocaine deal. They believed that the victim, who was not involved in drug activity, could help them locate the cousin. In the alternative, De Los Santos thought that by orchestrating the kidnapping of the victim, he would gain a valuable bargaining chip. Unable to supply the drug traffickers with information, the victim, a 34-year-old father to a young child, was gunned down in front of his wife and father-in-law at his home. De Los Santos fled. The shooter and three others were subsequently arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. SNP investigators doggedly pursued De Los Santos until he was captured in North Carolina and returned to New York City. The trial was handled by Assistant District Attorneys from SNP’s Special Investigations Bureau and the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office.



*A sophisticated heroin trafficking organization used carefully concealed compartments and electronic surveillance.*

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# Legal Training Unit

The Legal Training Unit develops and implements the professional training curriculum offered to Assistant District Attorneys. The unit selects speakers, lectures and workshops to address topics that include investigatory and prosecutorial techniques, legal procedures, changes in the law, and effective approaches in the prosecution of felony narcotic and related crimes.

In 2014, the Legal Training Unit offered a professional development series and numerous workshops and lectures throughout the year to both experienced and new assistant district attorneys. Presentations included: *Evolution of New York State Drug Laws and Drug Enforcement Strategies*, *Recent Developments in the Law of Electronic Surveillance*, *Preparing for Takedown*, *Alternative Sentencing* and *Prescription Drug Investigations*.

The training curriculum complies with the regulations and guidelines of the New

York State Mandatory Continuing Legal Education program and all courses are open to prosecutors from the city's District Attorneys' Offices and other offices in the state. The office has been an accredited provider of the State's Continuing Legal Education Program since 2000.

For over a decade, SNP has devoted a portion of its resources to training programs offered to hundreds of local and federal enforcement and criminal justice personnel in New York and other areas of the country. Senior staff members lecture on narcotics investigations and prosecutions at the New York State District Attorney's Association Summer College, the New York Prosecutors Training Institute (NYPTI), the New York Police Department's Police Academy, Organized Crime Control Division and Narcotics Division, the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (DETF), and the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA).



*A senior attorney offers training on legal requirements and practical considerations relevant to motion practice in wiretap cases.*

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# NYPD Special Narcotics Team

The New York City Police Department has assigned a team of detectives to the office from the Narcotics Division's Organized Crime Control Bureau since 1972. The Special Projects Unit, as it is known, is under the command of a senior lieutenant who serves as a liaison between both agencies. Within SNP, the team's detectives are assigned to either the Search Warrant Unit or the Technical Unit.

Expert at tracking, safekeeping and presentation of electronically recorded evidence, the detectives also provide support on search warrant investigations and maintain citywide repositories for electronically recorded evidence and SNP search warrants.



## Search Warrant Unit

The Search Warrant Unit prepares search warrants and affidavits and expedites requests through the SNP. The detectives keep track of all confiscated evidence and maintain a database on arrests and seizures resulting from the execution of search warrants. The unit also educates new investigators on search warrant procedures. In 2014, the unit processed 1,277 search warrants.

## Technical Unit

The Technical Unit tracks and controls "chain of custody" for electronic media evidence and makes certain that all audio/video evidence is secure. The unit is responsible for the creation and testimony of grand jury/trial wiretap composite recordings and processes digital photographic evidence as well as data evidence.

In 2014, the unit registered 878 pieces of audio/video evidence, 1,424 pieces of wiretap media evidence, and 386 pieces of data and photographic evidence. The unit also prepared, created and registered 2,831 duplicate copies of registered electronic media evidence.



*Members of the NYPD Narcotic's Division Organized Crime Control Bureau are assigned to the Special Projects Unit.*

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# Support Services Units

## Fiscal

All agency fiscal activities, including the production and submission of funding requests to federal, state and city funding agencies, as well as the monitoring of expenditures, fall under the responsibility of the Fiscal Unit. To that end, the unit assesses and approves purchases and payment vouchers, disbursement of funds, such as petty cash, and payroll coordination; enforces fiscal policy; conducts internal audits; and reviews and approves agency procurements.

## Personnel

The Personnel Unit oversees and implements procedures related to the assignment or transfer of Assistant District Attorneys from the offices of the five county District Attorneys and the recruitment of managerial, administrative and clerical personnel. Unit staff participates in planning, developing and executing employee programs and policies for all staff. The unit disseminates information on mandatory programs and policies for all city agencies and monitors implementation of procedures; provides facts on citywide policies and labor relations issues; and maintains time and leave records for all staff. The unit is responsible for the bi-weekly distribution of paychecks and serves as liaison with the citywide payroll management system.



*Human Resource professionals administer payroll and benefits for agency staff.*

## Public Information

The Public Information Unit disseminates information about the office and responds to inquiries from members of the media, government agencies, advocacy groups and individuals on the status of cases, legal decisions, legislative action, citywide drug trafficking trends and the results of joint enforcement efforts.



*The Public Information Unit responds to media inquiries and tracks trends.*

## Community Outreach

The Community Outreach Coordinator meets with community and religious leaders, block associations, the New York City Housing Authority, and other groups to address local drug problems, while conferring regularly with NYPD officials to devise strategies to combat crime. Once an investigation is completed and a drug organization is removed from a building or neighborhood, resources



*The Community Outreach Director coordinates with law enforcement partners and community groups.*

are devoted toward providing community support services. Additionally, experienced prosecutors offer lectures to schools and youth groups on topics ranging from drug laws and gang activity to alternatives to incarceration.

### **Information Technologies (IT)**

Information Technology develops, establishes, and administers SNP's computer and telecommunication systems. The unit identifies needs and puts in place systems that effectively merge technology with office processes, and provides a variety of case-related services.



*IT staff provides technical support and assists in gathering digital evidence for investigations.*

### **Digital Forensics and Litigation**

**Support:** provides pre-trial and in-court technology support, including recovery and examination of evidence from electronic devices, trial exhibit preparation and presentation.

### **Application Development and**

**Support:** computer software development, maintenance and support.

**Technical Support:** supports staff in using electronic devices and addresses technical problems.

**Records Management:** files, registers and maintains a record of closed and bench warranted case files and processes parole requests.

**IT Infrastructure Support:** servers, computers, networks, computer storage, email and data backup maintenance and support.

**Case Information:** captures and tracks data pertaining to all cases prosecuted by the office, from arrest to disposition. The unit prepares regular reports and ad hoc reports on narcotics activities, trends, and statistical analyses. Unit staff is assigned to the Trial Division to coordinate data capture and provide additional support.

### **Criminal and Investigative Analysts**

Analysts are instrumental to all stages of investigation and prosecution, using the most current technology available to enhance a case from its inception through trial. Evidence from various sources is analyzed, including telephone communication carriers, social media sources, Treasury Department data and prescription drug-related data. Analysts prepare and process subpoenas, provide background searches using public records and law enforcement specific databases, prepare investigative reports, and act as points of contact for law enforcement. During the presentation of a case, analysts prepare trial exhibits, and testify in the grand jury and at trial.



*Analysts are instrumental to all stages of investigation and prosecution.*

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## Trial Preparation Assistants (TPAs)



*TPAs support the work of each legal division in the office.*

Trial Preparation Assistants (TPAs) are assigned to the Investigations Division, the Trial Division, Part N, and the Alternative Sentencing Division. Investigations and Trial Division TPAs track cases, maintain case records, and gather reports and legal papers required by Assistant District Attorneys. Additionally, they make arrangements for prisoners to be produced in court and help Assistants prepare for grand jury and trial presentations. Alternative Sentencing Bureau TPAs interview defendants who are diverted to treatment and track their progress. Part N TPAs assist in tracking plea offers, grand jury actions and case dispositions that take place in the Part.

## Extraditions/Detainers

The unit administers the return of fugitives apprehended or in custody in other jurisdictions and in foreign countries that have extradition treaties with the United States.

## Grand Jury Reporters

Grand Jury Reporters record, produce and maintain transcripts of confidential testimony presented before the grand juries.

## Interpretation and Translation Services

The unit interprets and translates for non-English speaking witnesses in debriefings with investigators and Assistant District Attorneys, and during testimony before the grand jury; provides written translation and transcription services for evidentiary consent and wiretap recordings that contain dialogue in a foreign language; and provides translation of foreign language documents.

## Operations

The Operations Unit is responsible for office maintenance, reproduction of documents, mail delivery, messenger services, housekeeping requests, office supply inventory and disbursement.



*The Operations Unit keeps the office running smoothly.*



*Grand Jury reporters transcribe and preserve testimony.*

# The People of SNP

## Holiday Party 2014





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# Executive & Legal Staff

**Bridget G. Brennan**  
Special Narcotics Prosecutor

**Steven M. Goldstein**  
Chief Assistant District Attorney

**Joseph J. Tesoriero**  
Executive Assistant District Attorney  
Chief of Investigations

**Lisa DePasquale**  
Chief of the Trial Division  
Chief of Alternative Sentencing

**Catherine A. Christian**  
Counsel for the Trial Division

**Thomas G. Van Noy**  
Administrative Assistant  
District Attorney

**Meggan K. Dodd**  
Counsel to the  
Special Narcotics Prosecutor

**Peter Kougasian**  
Special Assistant District Attorney

**Rhonda Ferdinand**  
Special Assistant District Attorney  
for Drug Prevention and Policy

**Charlotte Fishman**  
Director of Legal Training

**Scott Leet**  
Bureau Chief, 30/60

**Nicholas J. Mauro**  
Chief, Special Investigations Bureau

**Nigel I. Farinha**  
Co-Chief, Narcotics Gang Unit

**Edward Burns**  
Deputy Bureau Chief, 30/60

**Bernice Ordonez**  
Deputy Chief,  
Special Investigations Bureau

**Susan N. Lanzatella**  
Co-Chief, Narcotics Gang Unit

**Paul H. Harvey**  
Deputy Bureau Chief, 40/50

**Lisa M. Tompkins**  
Deputy Chief,  
Special Investigations Bureau

**Clark S. Abrams**  
Chief, Money Laundering and  
Financial Crimes Unit

**Steven R. Miller**  
Deputy Bureau Chief, 40/50

**Ryan Sakacs**  
Chief, Prescription Drug Investigation Unit

**Marcel J. Philippe**  
Chief, Forfeiture Unit

**William Cook**  
Chief Investigator

**Eryck Kratville**  
Chief, Heroin Interdiction Team

**Calvin Solomon**  
Director of Community Outreach

**Kati Cornell**  
Public Information Director

## NEW YORK COUNTY

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Kristin Bailey  
Amy Boddorff  
Erin Brzeski  
Edward Burns  
Wesley Cheng  
Catherine A. Christian  
Tess Cohen  
Nicholas Conner  
Daniel Davis  
Lisa DePasquale  
Meggan K. Dodd  
Kathleen V. Doyle  
Christopher C. Edel  
Nigel I. Farinha  
Rhonda Ferdinand  
Charlotte Fishman  
Nancy Frigo  
Philip J. Gary

Oren Gleich  
Steven M. Goldstein  
Katherine Gora  
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Alona Katz  
Bradley King  
Karolina Klyuchnikova  
Peter M. Kougasian  
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Susan N. Lanzatella  
Scott Leet  
Jeffrey Linehan  
Catherine Lloyd  
Michael Lui  
Matthew J. McKenzie  
Nicholas J. Mauro

Stephanie Minogue  
Mark Mohr  
Erica O'Brien  
Bernice Ordonez  
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Francesca Rios  
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Jordan S. Rubin  
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Amy Sharpe  
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Zachary Stendig  
Jill Streja  
Joseph J. Tesoriero  
Andres Torres  
Thomas G. Van Noy  
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James Hanley  
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Lisa M. Tompkins

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Grace Jean  
Anju Malhotra  
Steven R. Miller  
Ari M. Rottenberg

## QUEENS COUNTY

Paul H. Harvey

## RICHMOND COUNTY

Ryan Sakacs  
John Waszak

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# Managerial & Support Staff

## ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Joan Maloney, *Manager*

### Grand Jury Reporters Unit

Jodi Arnold  
Carol Bach  
Dana Cogliano  
Bonnie Greenstein  
Nancy McEnroe  
Mireille Monestime  
Reva Palmer

### Interpretation and Translation Services

Rosa Ruales

### Operations

Brian Benning  
Alberto LaGuer  
Taurean Morrell  
Albert Nichols

### EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

Carla Jenkins  
Hysa Moultrie-Miller  
Jakub Brodowski, *Legal Assistant*

### FISCAL

Lei Yuan, *Chief Financial Officer*  
Krisna Ramkhelawan, *Deputy Director*  
Ewelina Malysza  
Lan Wang

### GRAND JURY WARDENS

SCO Paul Siliati  
SCO Christopher Stottmann  
SCO George Vassall

### INVESTIGATORS

William Cook, *Chief Investigator*

### PERSONNEL

Beatrice Miller, *Director*  
Craig Jelen, *Deputy for Payroll Services*  
Lisa Thomas, *Deputy for NYCAPS/Compliance*  
Darlene Cole-Jeffrey  
Sylvia Fernandez  
Diane Johnson

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

Kati Cornell, *Director*

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Calvin Solomon, *Director*

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Benjamin Azaraev, *Director*

### Digital Forensics and Litigation Support

Gregory L. Wilson, *Deputy Director*  
Haley Mirrer  
Victor Roman

### Application Development and Support

Christopher Spies, *Supervisor*  
Veera Maganti

### Technical Support

Joseph Cullen  
Roland Alfred

### IT Infrastructure Support

Michael Leach

### Case Information

Michelle Myton, *Supervisor*  
Desiree Creary, *Part N*  
Debra Daniels  
Alisa Figueroa  
Regina Mavasheva  
Edward Montes  
Jocelyn Pilotin-Lazar  
Pilar Quinones  
Victor Rodriguez  
Anne Roy

### Bureau Coordinators

Karen Johnson  
Renee Williams

### NYPD TEAM

Lt. Alfred Vitale  
Det. Todd Cracco  
Det. Christopher R. Henderson  
Det. Robert Villani

### ALTERNATIVE SENTENCING DIVISION

Rochelle Davis, *Supervising TPA*  
Akua Akoto  
Andrea Obregon

## INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION

### Special Investigations Bureau

Diana Valentin, *Secretary*

### Trial Preparation Assistants

Ana Pichardo, *Support Administrator, Supervising TPA*  
Cindy Cintron, *Senior TPA*  
Jenilee Briones  
Chloe Caban  
Irina Diaz, *TPA/Junior Analyst*  
Miles Kaufman  
Peter Plumey

### Investigative Analysts

Mariella Chilmaza, *Senior Criminal Analyst*  
Jacquelyn Ahl  
Christian Bermudez  
Leesa Boireau  
Daniel Cassidy  
Jonathan Courtney  
Stefani L. Miotto  
Leonard Rizzo  
Willa Thompson  
David Webster

### Forfeiture Investigations Unit

John Polizzotto, *Coordinator*

### Narcotics Gang Unit

Christopher Torres, *TPA*

### Investigative and Trial Support Specialist

William Reeves

### Investigators Unit Support

Belinda McNeill

## TRIAL DIVISION

### Trial Preparation Assistants

*Bureau 30/60*  
Philip Lambert, *Supervising TPA*  
Michelle Jackson  
*Bureau 40/50*  
Maddalena Coppola, *Supervising TPA*  
Chanmattie Panlall

### Extraditions

Carla Jenkins, *Coordinator*

---

**Managing & Copy Editor:**

Kati Cornell

**Editors:**

Joan Maloney

Jakub Brodowski

Thomas G. Van Noy

Craig Jelen

**Photography:**

Jonathan Courtney

Kati Cornell

Joseph J. Tesoriero

R. Umar Abbasi

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, New York Division  
Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Investigators Unit  
New York City Police Department  
New York State Police



