

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

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Major prescription drug trafficker arrested: over 2,700 narcotic pain pills bound for New England

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, WILBERT L. PLUMMER, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Field Division (DEA), New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY and JOSEPH A. D'AMICO, Superintendent of the New York State Police, announced today the arrests of a major prescription drug trafficker and two other individuals on charges of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance. Agents also seized over \$100,000 in oxycodone, a highly addictive narcotic painkiller, at the time of the arrests.

The main defendant, JOSE GARCIA ACOSTA, was the subject of a long-term investigation by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit and the Drug Enforcement Task Force, Team T-22. Agents believe ACOSTA regularly collected thousands of opioid pills in New York City and resold them in New England in a scheme that netted him millions of dollars each year.

GARCIA ACOSTA was apprehended on Sunday evening at approximately 7:30 p.m., when New York State Police Troopers stopped his Honda Odyssey minivan on the Hutchinson River Parkway in Westchester. A search of the vehicle yielded over 3,100 prescription pills, including 2,725 tablets of oxycodone. The drugs were stashed in a "trap" (a hidden compartment) inside the rear seat. The investigation revealed that this load was bound for New England, where it would have sold for more than \$110,000.

This morning, agents conducted a search of ACOSTA's apartment at 1660 Topping Avenue in the Bronx and seized bank records, drug ledgers and crushed blue pills that will be submitted for testing.

According to intelligence gathered during the investigation, GARCIA ACOSTA made two to three trips to New England each week and delivered shipments of anywhere from 2,000 and 5,000 pills of oxycodone and oxymorphone (another highly addictive painkiller) for sale each time. GARCIA ACOSTA purchased the opioid pain pills in New York City for approximately \$16 each and then resold them on

the black market in a region of New England where they command a price of approximately \$40 per tablet – or twice the price they carry in New York City. It is estimated that GARCIA ACOSTA sold up to \$1 million in opioid pills per month.

GARCIA ACOSTA obtained the drugs from “bundlers” who operate in open-air markets on certain blocks in Upper Manhattan and the Bronx. The bundlers illegally purchase pills from a multitude of sources, including street-level dealers, patients, forgers and other individuals.

Prior to stopping GARCIA ACOSTA’s vehicle on Sunday evening, members of T-22 learned that he and a driver, VLADIMIR MATOS, would be heading to New England to deliver a large shipment. They observed GARCIA ACOSTA and MATOS pick up narcotic pills in the Bronx and then head north on the Hutchinson River Parkway.

The Troopers also arrested MATOS and his sister, WENDY MATOS PINEDA, who was riding in the car. PINEDA’s five-year-old son was also present in the vehicle.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN said, “Just as New York City has long been a hub for heroin and cocaine trafficking nationwide, this case demonstrates that criminal enterprises are using the same well-travelled routes to peddle narcotic painkillers. Jose Garcia Acosta tapped into an elaborate network of prescription drug bundlers in New York City in order to line his own pockets. His highly lucrative and highly illegal business fueled the addictions of countless opioid users along the East Coast.”

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge WILBERT L. PLUMMER stated, “There is no difference between prescription drug traffickers and heroin/marijuana/cocaine traffickers. Even though people think it is safe to use prescription medications, it is not unless it is prescribed by a medical doctor for a medical reason. This drug distribution organization distributed prescription opiate medication throughout the Eastern Seaboard for profit and will now face the consequences of their actions.”

New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY said, “Jose Acosta bought, sold and delivered thousands of illegally diverted prescription drugs to dealers and addicts each week. Acosta distributed such a large quantity of pills that he fueled much of the market for prescription drug street sales in the Bronx and Washington Heights. His arrest should have a salutary effect on the residents of those neighborhoods. I commend the NYPD detectives, DEA agents and New York State Police troopers assigned to the Drug Enforcement Task Force, as well as the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their work throughout this investigation.”

JOSEPH A. D’AMICO, Superintendent of the New York State Police, said, “The collaborative efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New York State Police, New York City Police Department, and New York City Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor have resulted in significant arrests. At a time when prescription drug abuse is plaguing this country, these arrests send a strong message to drug traffickers that selling illegally obtained prescription drugs in our communities will not be tolerated.”

All three defendants pleaded not guilty at their arraignments in Manhattan Criminal Court yesterday, where bail was set at \$250,000 for each.

DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Jose Garcia Acosta 5/7/1979 1660 Topping Avenue Bronx, NY	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
Vladimir Matos 11/29/1969 2542 University Avenue Bronx, NY	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct

Wendy Matos Pineda
11/17/1971
197 Prospect Street
Lawrence, MA

CPCS 1st – 1 ct
CPCS 3rd – 1 ct

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.