

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

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Drug kingpin sentenced to 11 years in prison: \$6.5 million “crystal meth” and heroin haul

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, announced today the sentencing of drug kingpin JOSE MAURO MOTA to 11 years in prison and five years post-release supervision for Operating as a Major Trafficker and 3 ½ years to 10 ½ years for Conspiracy in the Second Degree. Both prison terms are to run concurrently.

Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Juan Merchan imposed the sentence under the terms of a guilty plea that MOTA entered midway through his trial on April 28, 2015. A New York City-based drug trafficker, MOTA admitted to receiving a large drug shipment containing over 23 kilograms (51 lbs.) of methamphetamine, “crystal meth,” and five kilograms (11 lbs.) of heroin from Mexican suppliers.

At the time of the guilty plea, Assistant District Attorneys with the Special Investigations Bureau (SIB) had just finished presenting their direct case. Evidence at trial demonstrated that MOTA acted as a major distributor of narcotics for the eastern seaboard. In 2011, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division noted that 51 pounds of methamphetamine was the region's largest seizure of that drug in recent history. Meanwhile, the heroin in this case tested at an extraordinarily high purity level of 90 percent.

The DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF), Group T-33, conducted a two-week wiretap investigation. With authorization from the court, agents were able to record MOTA's calls and track the progress of the drug shipment as it moved across the country. MOTA was arrested on July 3, 2011 at the Vince Lombardi Service Area off Interstate 95 (I-95) in Ridgefield, N.J., where agents seized the significant load of methamphetamine and heroin as it was being transferred from a tractor trailer to a car.

Evidence suggested that MOTA had been expecting a load of heroin and cocaine from his Mexican suppliers. It was only after the shipment had crossed the border from Mexico into Texas that MOTA learned it contained heroin and methamphetamine instead.

During the trial, an NYPD detective with the NYDEFT served as an expert witness and testified that Mexican cartels began substituting methamphetamine for other narcotics in shipments bound for New

York City at around the time of this 2011 shipment, and that this has become a pattern in subsequent cases. The detective testified that the cartels were attempting to expand the market for methamphetamine, which is manufactured in Mexican super labs.

A second defendant, DEIVIS RAFAEL CEBALLOS, who was arrested alongside MOTA, also stood trial. Following MOTA's guilty plea, jurors delivered a partial verdict as to CEBALLOS. Justice Juan Merchan declared a mistrial as to three charges: Conspiracy in the Second Degree, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree. CEBALLOS faces retrial on these counts. His next court date is July 22.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, which is comprised of DEA agents, members of the New York City Police Department and New York State Police investigators. Ms. Brennan commended the work of Assistant District Attorneys James Hanley and Kristin Bailey, who are assigned to the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office by Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., respectively.