

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

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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Over \$2 million in heroin and crystal meth and one firearm seized from drug trafficking trio

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and JOSEPH A. D'AMICO, Superintendent of the New York State Police, announced today the indictment of three drug traffickers on charges stemming from the seizure of 4.5 kilos of heroin (approximately 10 lbs.) and 4 kilos of methamphetamine (approximately 9 lbs.).

The New York State Police Special Investigations Unit (NYSP SIU) seized the narcotics after investigators observed the trio hand off a bag containing three kilos of heroin (6.6 lbs.) in the Bronx on April 9. Investigators had followed the defendants by car from a drug stash house in Corona, Queens.

MIGUEL MERCADO-GUELEN, an illegal alien who was previously deported in 2003 and illegally returned to the U.S., was arrested on April 9 and is scheduled to be arraigned on the indictment today before Judge Melissa C. Jackson in Manhattan Supreme Court.

On the day of the arrests, investigators were conducting surveillance outside the Queens stash house at 24-24 96th St. as part of a short-term probe when they observed MERCADO-GUELEN, who resides at the house, enter with HENRY NUNEZ. A short time later DIEGO ESTEVEZ also entered the house. Subsequently, NUNEZ and ESTEVEZ exited from the rear of the house, followed by MERCADO-GUELEN.

Investigators followed as MERCADO-GUELEN and NUNEZ drove off in one vehicle together, while ESTEVEZ left in a separate vehicle. Both cars travelled to the Bronx and stopped near the intersection of East 212th Street and Dekalb Avenue. Investigators observed ESTEVEZ leave his vehicle and briefly enter MERCADO-GUELEN's car. He emerged with a black bag.

MERCADO-GUELEN and NUNEZ drove off and were stopped by investigators a short time later. Meanwhile, ESTEVEZ set out on foot. Investigators stopped him and seized the bag containing 3 kilos (6.6 lbs.) of heroin. One of the kilos was of a variety of heroin called "black tar" that originates in Mexico.

The three defendants were detained while investigators conducted a court authorized search of the Corona stash location, a two-level apartment on the ground floor and basement. Inside the apartment, investigators found a dresser with a hidden compartment containing the remaining 1.5 kilograms of

heroin (over 3 lbs.) and the 4 kilos methamphetamine, as well as a 9 mm handgun and a loaded magazine clip.

The methamphetamine, known as “crystal meth” or “ice,” was in a crystalized smokeable form. Megalabs in Mexico are producing vast quantities of crystal meth for distribution to the U.S. and investigators believe that the crystal meth seized was produced in there. The four kilos of crystal meth carry a street value of approximately \$960,000.

According to data released by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the number of New York City Emergency Department visits related to methamphetamine misuse and abuse more than doubled between 2004 and 2011, rising from 214 to 576.

The search of the stash house also yielded a ledger discussing “ice” transactions, \$2,000 that had been hidden inside a vent, and equipment for packaging narcotics, including masks, grinders, a kilo-press and a scale. The 4.5 kilos of heroin retail for more than \$1 million.

ESTEVEZ was arraigned on May 1, with bail set at \$500,000. NUNEZ was arraigned on May 6, with bail set at \$200,000.

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN said, “This seizure is typical of a pattern that we’ve seen developing in our narcotics investigations across the city. Methamphetamine is a homegrown product for Mexican cartels. Clearly they are trying to promote the use and addiction to crystal meth here in New York City. The city Health Department data reflects a dangerous escalation in related hospitalizations. This case affirms our commitment with the New York State Police and our other law enforcement partners to curtail the distribution of this extremely dangerous drug.”

New York State Police Superintendent JOSEPH A. D’AMICO said, “The indictments of these three individuals have broken up a drug trafficking operation that poured literally pounds of deadly, illicit drugs into the streets of Queens and beyond. I am proud of the work done by the New York State Police Special Investigations Unit. I am also pleased that our continued partnership with the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York will mean that these drug and weapon offenses will be successfully prosecuted and the offenders will face justice for their actions.”

DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Miguel Mercado-Guelen (aka Tony Perez, Ramon Abreu and Porfirio Perez) 24-24 96 th St. Queens, N.Y. 03/29/1980	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 2 cts CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 3 cts Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2 nd – 2 cts Criminal Possession of a Weapon 3 rd – 1 ct
Henry Nunez 270 Empire Blvd #2D Brooklyn, N.Y. 03/08/1975	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
Diego Estevez 11 Mannions Lane #13 Danbury, Conn. 06/03/1973	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct

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

