



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

**Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics
Prosecutor**

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PRESS RELEASE

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INDICTMENT SHUTTERS HEROIN MILL BELOW CHILDCARE CENTER

New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan announced today the indictment of a mother-son-daughter trio connected to the seizure of over two kilograms of a compound mixture of morphine, codeine and 6-monoacetylmorphine as well as over 7,000 glassine bags of heroin in the rear apartment of a two-story Bronx house. Located at 555 Taylor Avenue in the Sound View section, the building also houses a day care center which had no connection to the drug mill. Ramfis Aquino, 26, his mother Rosa Mercado, 52, and 22-year-old sister Chastese Mercado are charged in the indictment with multiple counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees and Criminal Possession of Drug Paraphernalia.

Special Narcotics search warrant was executed by members of NYPD's Bronx Narcotics on Friday, February 15, 2008 at the two-floor, three-bedroom apartment at the rear of the Taylor Avenue house. Heroin and drug paraphernalia were on view in various rooms. In one of the bedrooms, police recovered an open duffel bag containing two kilograms of what was identified by the Police Lab as an opiate-base mixture, in excess of 6,000 heroin-packed glassine bags, and two ziplock bags with over eight ounces of loose heroin. In the same room, they uncovered a trap at the back of a nightstand covered with heroin residue where they found more than 700 heroin-filled glassine bags and a bullet proof vest and a bullet proof jacket hanging in a closet. In a second bedroom, in excess of 200 heroin glassine bags were found in a trap beneath the floor boards. Also seized was a box of live rounds of ammunition and over 500 empty glassines envelopes from inside a kitchen cabinet. Two digital scales were also recovered from inside the residence.

Both codeine and morphine are precursors used to make heroin. The price in New York City for a kilogram of heroin ranges from \$43,000 to \$75,000, an ounce of heroin can go for as high as \$3,000 depending on the area. The 7,000-plus heroin glassine bags recovered sell for \$20 a bag.

A kilogram of morphine goes for \$1,200 and a kilo of codeine for \$1,300. In all, the estimated value of the drugs recovered is over \$163,000.

The defendants appeared in Part N yesterday, where bail was continued and the case was adjourned to March 27 in Part 1. Defendant Ramfus Aquino is being held on \$300,000 bail and both Rosa Mercado and Chastese Mercado are being held on \$100,000 bail. If convicted, Ramfis Aquino faces a sentence of up to twenty-four years; Rosa Mercado and Chastese Mercado face sentences of up to twenty years.

Ramfis Aquino, 555 Taylor Avenue, Bronx, NY

Rosa Mercado, 753 Fox Avenue, Bronx, NY

Chastese Mercado, 252 At The Falls Street, Bushkill, PA
