



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

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Press Release

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OPERATION UNTOUCHABLES

New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan, New York City Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge John P. Gilbride, and New York State Police Superintendent Wayne E. Bennett announce the indictment and arrest of 14 members of a ring responsible for kidnappings, burglaries and drug related robberies in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens.

The arrests began last week and ended yesterday with the surrender of defendant Eulalia Rodriguez, the wife of Joseph Hernandez, who, along with Reyes Rodriguez, was a ringleader of the group. Investigators dubbed the case "Operation Untouchables," because of a tattoo several defendants had inscribed on their wrists.

From March to August 2005, in a crime spree that spilled into Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens, the members of the group are charged with committing nine violent push-in robberies in which victims, including children, were held at gunpoint, threatened, and assaulted. Often, the group was looking for drugs or drug profits, but frequently broke into the homes of innocent residents and robbed them any way. In five of the nine incidents, children were present in the apartments and were held at gunpoint or herded into a locked room and forced to remain there. The investigation was conducted by the REDRUM group of the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force composed of DEA agents, NYPD detectives, the New York State Police, investigators from the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office, and New York City Police Department Precinct Detective Units.

The violent spree began with a robbery on Wadsworth Terrace in Manhattan on March 8, 2005. Four members of the robbery crew used an older woman posing as a neighbor to gain access to an apartment where they believed they would find kilograms of cocaine. The armed robbers pushed their way in, pointed a gun at an occupant, forced him to kneel on the floor and beat him

in front of his three and four year old children. They fled the apartment with cash, cocaine and jewelry.

Ten days later, the four armed members of the crew, intending to steal drugs and money, entered the second floor bedroom window of a sleeping Queens couple at three in the morning. Realizing they had entered the wrong apartment and that their intended victim lived downstairs, they held the couple and their teenage daughter at gunpoint for five hours, smoking cigarettes and eating and drinking while they waited for their intended victim in the downstairs apartment to leave. When the occupant of the downstairs apartment opened the door to take her two children to school, the robbery crew forced the woman and her children back into the apartment at gunpoint, while their companions continued to hold the upstairs occupants at gunpoint. They ransacked the apartment, pried up floor boards looking for traps but found only \$200 and about \$4,500 in jewelry. The defendants ripped out the telephone lines to prevent calls to the police before they fled.

On May 25, 2005 at 6 pm, the victims were a couple and four children in a Bronx apartment that served as a day care center during the day. The crew had received a tip that a large amount of cash, partially from a tax return, was in the apartment. Eulalia Rodriguez, wife of Joseph Hernandez, posed as a neighbor and knocked at the door. Among the crew, she was known for her proficiency in gaining entrance into the targeted locations. Three armed robbers, including Hernandez with an Uzi, stormed in, threw a female occupant to the floor, tied up and pistol whipped a male occupant while four young children, ages 3, 5, 7 and 8, looked on. The four children were instructed to remain quiet, stay on their knees and put their hands behind their heads. Eventually they and the female occupant were locked into a bathroom. \$32,000 and jewelry was taken in that heist.

Four days later, the crew robbed a grocery store in the Bronx, held a store worker and four customers at gunpoint and locked them inside the grocery padlocking the gate from the outside. They fled with \$3,000 in cash and phone cards.

On August 9, 2005 crew leader Joseph Hernandez, armed with a loaded 9mm, and an associate staked out a Bronx apartment where a mother and daughter were staying. They pushed their way into the location when the pair arrived, and tied them up with a telephone wire. The defendants were looking for 10 kilograms of cocaine, when they failed to find the drugs, they fled with \$100 in cash and jewelry.

Police collected samples for DNA testing from many of the robbery scenes and analysis will be performed on defendants DNA.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said: "This investigation serves as a painful reminder of the wanton violence that so often accompanies the drug trade. The viciousness of the attacks, the indifference to the presence of children, and the recklessness makes the case particularly disturbing."

DEA Special Agent in Charge John P. Gilbride stated, "Robin Hoods they are not. They might have thought they were acting like Robin Hood...stealing from the rich to give to the poor. On

the Contrary, The Drug Enforcement Task Force's REDRUM unit investigated this heinous organization that was responsible for breaking into 9 residences with the intent to steal drugs and drug proceeds. This is yet another example of the cruel extent the greedy will go to in order to reap the money that is proliferated throughout the drug trade."

New York State Police Superintendent Wayne E. Bennett said: "It is only through mutual cooperation that those of us charged with enforcing the law can make headway against those who choose to violate it. The successful culmination of "Operation Untouchables" demonstrates the continuing cooperation that exists between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in the effort to remove violent predators and dangerous weapons from our communities. "

During the takedown, five guns were recovered. The defendants were arraigned on the indictment in Manhattan Supreme Court in front of Judge William Wetzel.

DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
1 Joseph Hernandez, 37 108 Field Place Bronx, NY	Robbery 1 – 4 cts Robbery 2 – 4 cts Burglary 1 – 4 cts Kidnapping 2 – 3 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
2 Eulalia Rodriguez, 40 22-52 99th Street Queens, NY	Robbery 1 – 2 cts Robbery 2 – 2 cts Burglary 1 – 2 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
3 Reyes Rodriguez, 40 66 Beekman Avenue Westchester, NY	Robbery 1 – 4 cts Robbery 2 – 4 cts Burglary 1 – 4 cts Kidnapping 2 – 3 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
4 Luis Sierra, 41 225 East 149th Street Bronx, NY	Robbery 1 – 1 ct Robbery 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
5 Jairo Delrosario, 22 2775 Bainbridge Ave Bronx, NY	Robbery 1 – 4 cts Robbery 2 – 4 cts Burglary 1 – 3 cts Kidnapping 2 – 3 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct

6 Jesus Martinez, 22 1430 Amsterdam Avenue New York, NY	Robbery 1 – 2 cts Robbery 2 – 4 cts Burglary 1 – 3 cts Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2 – 2 cts Criminal Possession of a Weapon 3 – 2 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
7 Ronny Serrata, 26 71 Wyckoff St Brooklyn, NY	Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2 – 2 cts Criminal Possession of a Weapon 3 – 2 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
8 Ramon Padilla, 31 1240 Walton Avenue Bronx, NY	Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2 – 2 cts Criminal Possession of a Weapon 3 – 2 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
9 Leonardo Antigua, 31 1916 Grand Concourse Bronx, NY	Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
10 Alex Tirado, 31 1240 Walton Avenue Bronx, NY	Robbery 1 – 1 ct Robbery 2 – 1 ct Burglary 1 – 1 ct Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
11 Christopher Inoa, 20 520 West 134th St New York, NY	Robbery 1 – 1 ct Robbery 2 – 1 ct Burglary 2 – 1 ct Kidnapping 2 – 3 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
12 Neito Fernandez, 31	Robbery 1 – 1 ct Robbery 2 – 1 ct Burglary 1 – 1 ct Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2 – 1 ct Criminal Possession of a Weapon 3 – 2 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
13 Leonardo Delgado, 30 1430 Amsterdam Avenue New York, NY	Robbery 1 – 1 ct Robbery 2 – 1 ct Burglary 1 – 1 ct Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
14 Manuel Vazquez, 35 1430 Amsterdam Avenue	Robbery 1 – 3 cts Robbery 2 – 4 cts Burglary 1 – 3 cts

New York, NY	Kidnapping 2 – 3 cts Conspiracy 2 – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 – 1 ct
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