

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

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

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## **Thirty-nine kilos of heroin worth over \$20 million seized in Richmond Hill, Queens**

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York, Wilbert L. PLUMMER, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY and JAMES T. HAYES, JR., Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Office of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), announced today the seizure of 39 kilograms of heroin (86 lbs.) during a court authorized search of an apartment at 86-34 122<sup>nd</sup> Street in Richmond Hill, Queens, which housed a heroin distribution center. Agents arrested one individual, JOSE SANTIAGO DIAZ, who worked at the location where heroin was repackaged for distribution. The investigation revealed that DIAZ is an illegal alien who was previously deported to the Dominican Republic.

The large stash of heroin, recovered from the ground floor apartment on Wednesday evening, is estimated to carry a street value of more than \$20 million. Eight packages of pressed heroin weighing more than 2 ½ pounds each were found lying on the floor of the studio apartment, while another 11 packages were recovered from inside a duffel bag. A makeshift assembly line had been set up on a table, complete with kilo presses and multiple buckets containing grinders, sifters and other paraphernalia. Another 10 kilograms of loose heroin were on the table with the buckets. Brown sugar used as a cutting agent was also recovered from the apartment.

Agents and detectives with the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force had been conducting surveillance at the suspected drug location for several weeks prior to the search. On Tuesday night, members of the Strike Force team observed an individual wearing latex gloves that are typical of those worn by heroin mill workers exit the front door of the building and then return inside. Moments later the agents saw an individual wearing latex gloves open a window in the ground floor

apartment. Agents and detectives approached the building and noticed a strong odor of heroin emanating from a window and an air conditioner.

Shortly after midnight, JOSE SANTIAGO DIAZ exited the building and drove off in a vehicle. Agents stopped the car and detained DIAZ after he made inconsistent statements. Agents detected the smell of heroin on DIAZ and determined that he was in possession of the keys to the ground floor apartment at 86-34 122<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Members of the Strike Force team contacted the Port Authority Police K-9 Unit, which dispatched a Port Authority police officer and a K-9 dog to the building at 86-34 122<sup>nd</sup> Street. Upon sniffing the door to the residence, the dog signaled the presence of narcotics. Agents froze the location over night and Special the Narcotics Prosecutor’s Office obtained the search warrant on Wednesday afternoon.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN said, “I commend the excellent work by agents and detectives in this case. We seized a very large quantity of heroin high in the distribution chain. This would have ended up as millions of user-ready packets on the streets of our city.”

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge WILBERT L. PLUMMER stated, “Over the past few years we have seen an increase in opiate abuse within the New York area. This has been a great concern to law enforcement and our community. These arrests demonstrate that law enforcement is determined to identify those responsible - especially by locating the distribution centers, stash houses and distribution organizations that supply the Tri-state area which are known as ‘heroin mills’. DEA and SNP investigators seized 39 kilograms of heroin inside this mill, which equates to producing over \$20 million worth of dime bags of heroin that would have been sold on the streets throughout our communities and the Northeast.”

New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY said, “NYPD detectives and Federal agents, supported by the outstanding work by Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan and her staff, have brought this heroin mill to a grinding halt. In putting a major drug dealer out of business, they have also saved lives in stopping the violent crime that is never far from narcotics trafficking.”

“Heroin not only poses a significant public safety risk, it also generates huge profits that are often funneled back into other types of illegal activity,” said JAMES T. HAYES JR., Special Agent in Charge of HSI New York. The seizures and arrests today are a testament to HSI’s commitment to keep illegal drugs off our streets.”

The DEA’s New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force is comprised of agents and officers of the U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York City Police Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement – Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the New York State Police, the U. S. Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the U.S. Marshal Service and with assistance from the New York City Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor’s Office. The Strike Force is partially funded by the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), which is a federally funded crime fighting initiative.

DEFENDANT	CHARGES
Jose Santiago Diaz 5/1/1968 75 Thayer Street New York, NY	CPCS 1st – 1 ct CPCS 3rd – 1 ct Criminal Possession of Drug Paraphernalia 2nd – 3 cts

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