

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

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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“Operation Dot Com” targets illegal drug sales on Craigslist: 21 arrested

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and RAYMOND W. KELLY, New York City Police Commissioner, announced today the indictment and arrests 21 defendants who made illegal sales of prescription drugs and illicit narcotics to undercover NYPD officers after posting advertisements on the website Craigslist.

The arrests were the result of an 11-month investigation by the NYPD's Manhattan South Narcotics, dubbed Operation Dot Com, which centered on independent drug sellers who connected with buyers through Craigslist. The majority of the defendants were arrested over the past month, with the final two arrests this morning. The earliest arrests took place in December 2011 and July 2012.

During the investigation, undercover police officers made 63 drug purchases for over \$29,400, including approximately \$19,000 in pills and \$10,400 in cocaine. The defendants sold more than 1,000 prescription pills, including as Roxicontin, Adderall, Ambien, Percocet, Vicodin, Xanax, Suboxone, Opana, Klonopin and Valium. The officers also purchased quantities of heroin and ecstasy. Sales took place in the vicinity of Union Square and Washington Square Park, on street corners and in meeting spots such as coffee shops, grocery stores and a book store, among other locations. Undercover officers also met sellers in Midtown Manhattan, near Penn Station and in the MetLife Building, and in SoHo, the West Village, the Lower East Side and the Upper East Side.

The defendants range in age from 22 to 62 and represent a broad spectrum of occupations, from student, teacher's aide and human resource professional to celebrity photographer and dot com entrepreneur. Some individuals have no identifiable source of legitimate income.

Many of the Craigslist postings advertised “study aids” or “pain relief.” One ad stated, “Friendly Nyu student who can offer pain relief and anxiety relief. Easy, non-sketchy, straightforward meeting” and listed “perc roxy.” Another posting read, “Study longer and without anxiety! Be professional and not law enforcement.”

Half of the defendants arrested in Operation Dot Com were selling either Adderall (prescribed for treating attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) or Xanax (used to treat anxiety disorders). Over the past five years, the number of Adderall and Xanax prescriptions filled by pharmacies in New York City has soared. Data from the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement shows the rate of Adderall prescriptions being filled in New York City more than doubled between 2007 and 2011, with nearly 300,000

prescriptions filled citywide in 2011. Meanwhile, there were over 525,000 prescriptions filled for Xanax in 2011, which is approximately 50 percent more than in 2007.

The other half of the sales involved opioid painkillers, such as Roxicotin, Opana, Percocet and Vicodin. All of these highly addictive medications are widely abused. In New York City, the number of prescriptions residents filled for oxycodone and hydrocodone (two of the most highly abused families of opioid drugs) reached nearly two million. That is the equivalent of nearly one prescription for every fourth New York City resident. The number of oxycodone prescriptions filled by residents increased 124% between 2007 and 2011.

In one case, a defendant initially sold pills to an undercover officer and later went on to offer large quantities of cocaine. Defendant LUCY AYOUB first sold an undercover officer Adderall. The sales escalated until she and her boyfriend, RONALD BOLANOS were arrested the evening of Wednesday, Sept. 19, after selling an officer 100 grams of cocaine for \$4,000.

Two defendants who were arrested early in the investigation have already been indicted. In December 2011, police arrested MARIEL JAVIER, a former New York City teacher's aide, for selling Adderall to an undercover officer and is charged with Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Fifth Degree and Criminal Diversion of Prescription Medications in the Fourth Degree. JENNIFER SULTAN, a dot com entrepreneur, was arrested in July 2012 for selling 300 pills to undercover officers, including a variety of narcotic prescription drugs. She faces one count of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree and five counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree.

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, said, "Whether the drug deal occurs on the street corner or on the Internet, it's a crime. It is illegal to sell prescription drugs whatever the source – the black market or pills originally prescribed to you. Clearly there is an overabundance of prescription drugs and opportunists looking to profit from their access to them. As a result, we are battling escalating rates of addiction and overdose deaths."

RAYMOND W. KELLY, New York City Police Commissioner, said, "There's an epidemic of prescription drug addiction and abuse in New York that is ruining lives and producing violent crime, including drug store robberies in which gunmen have demanded their drug of choice by name. I want to commend Special Narcotics Prosecutor Brennan for focusing on this scourge and prosecuting traffickers in cyberspace or wherever they are found."

DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Scarlett Arias 4/8/1979 615 W. 186 th St. New York, NY	CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct CSCS 5 st – 1 ct
Lucy Ayoub 7/5/1985 30-80 21st St. Queens, NY	CSCS 1st – 1 ct CSCS 2nd – 1 ct
Nicholas Baily 4/10/1975 124 Remsen Ave., Apt. 10 Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 5th – 1 ct
Ronald Bolanos 12/10/1969 157-11 Sanford Ave., Apt. 5D Flushing, NY	CSCS 1st – 1 ct CSCS 2nd – 1 ct
John Cho 10/16/1984 254 Montgomery St. Jersey City, NJ	CSCS 5th – 2 cts
Jonathan Conley 2/19/1989 488 Chauncey St. Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 3rd – 1 cts CPCS 3rd – 1 ct
Parris Daniels 1/29/1968 262 W. 154th St., Apt. 2D New York, NY	CSCS 3rd – 1 ct
William Delace 6/22/1979 2745 Ocean Ave., Apt. 1 Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 5th – 5 cts CPCS 5th – 1 ct
Omar Dyer 10/14/1981 6434 224th St., Apt. 1 Oakland Gardens, NY	CSCS 3rd – 1 ct CPCS 3rd – 1 ct
Orlando Gines 8/25/1963 221 Burn St. Somerset, NJ	CSCS 3rd – 1 ct CSCS 5th – 1 ct CSCS 2nd – 1 ct
Rosanna Gorgy 4/17/1989 99 Narrows Rd. Staten Island, NY	CSCS 5th – 3 cts
Mariel Javier 5/2/1987 430 W. 125th St., Apt. 3H New York, NY	CSCS 5th – 1 ct Criminal Diversion of Prescription Medications 4th – 1 ct

Eiyal Hillel 8/31/1973 153-33 79 Ave., Apt. 3 Queens, NY	CSCS 3rd – 1 ct
Yasmin Malhotra 5/5/1987 53 White Oak Drive Princeton, NJ	CSCS 5th – 5 cts CPCS 5th – 1 ct CPCS 7th – 1 ct
Sean Mitchell 2/10/1976 11 Pine Street, #308 Montclair, NJ	CSCS 4th – 1 ct
Chan Moon 2/16/1984 21 Bruce Lane East Northport, NY	CSCS 3rd – 1 ct Attempted CSCS 3rd – 1 ct
Katherine Pettijohn 6/20/1990 30 E. 23rd St., Apt. 4B New York, NY	CSCS 5th – 1 ct
Jennifer Sultan 5/12/1974 5 E. 17th St., Apt. 8 New York, NY	CSCS 2nd – 1 ct CSCS 3rd – 5 cts
Abdullah Taraman 10/6/1988 637 Wilson Ave., 2L Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 3rd – 1 ct CPCS 3rd – 1 ct
Anthony Vargas 8/2/1972 2841 W. 33rd St., Apt. 11H Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 3rd – 4 cts CSCS 4th – 1 ct
Charlyn Zlotnick 7/6/1950 170 Ave. C, Apt. 12A New York, NY	CSCS 5th – 1 ct

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