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Manhattan physician's assistant and attorney arrested for fraudulent narcotic prescriptions

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 of ERIC SCHEIN, a physician's assistant, and PERRI WEISSMAN, an attorney, in connection with a scheme to fill fraudulent prescriptions for Percocet, a narcotic painkiller.

SCHEIN and WEISSMAN, who are engaged to be married, were arrested this morning at approximately 6 a.m. in their home at 400 East 71st Street, Apt. 9I, in Manhattan. Their arraignments are scheduled for later today before Judge Michael Sonberg in Manhattan Supreme Court, 111 Centre, Part 21. The arrests follow a six-month investigation by investigators with the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office and the New York State Health Department's Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE). Detectives from the NYPD's 19th Precinct assisted with the arrests.

The new indictment, filed by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Prescription Drug Investigation Unit, charges SCHEIN and WEISSMAN with a combined 66 counts, including Conspiracy, Criminal Sale of a Prescription for a Controlled Substance, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, Forgery and Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument.

During the course of the conspiracy, which spanned a 16-month period between September 2010 and December 2011, the pair filled 163 prescriptions for Percocet in their own names, for a total of over 13,000 Percocet pills.

The charges in the new indictment stem from 25 of these prescriptions, which were fraudulently presented to pharmacies between September 2010 and December 2011.

During the time period in question, SCHEIN worked as a physician's assistant, first at Mount Sinai Medical School in Manhattan and later at a family practitioner's office in Inwood, New York. He was terminated from both positions.

WEISSMAN, an attorney, worked at Duane Reade/Walgreens as a Subpoena Compliance Officer. As part of her job, she reviewed subpoenas from prosecutors' offices seeking information related to criminal investigations, including subpoenas from Special Narcotics in unrelated investigations. She has

also been terminated from her position.

Investigators launched the investigation in January 2012 based on information reported by former employers of SCHEIN and WEISSMAN. The investigators learned that SCHEIN had taken prescription pads from both of his former places of employment. He wrote out prescriptions to himself by forging the names of two different practitioners with whom he worked. SCHEIN also wrote prescriptions to WEISSMAN under his own name and Drug Enforcement Administration number, purporting to have approval of a supervising physician.

The prescriptions were generally for between 60 and 90 Percocet pills. SCHEIN and WEISSMAN presented the prescriptions at several pharmacies in Manhattan's Upper East Side, including a Duane Reade and a Walgreens located within blocks of the couple's home. Both SCHEIN and WEISSMAN were captured on security video filling the fraudulent prescriptions.

The investigation revealed that from August 2010 to April of 2011, while SCHEIN was working for Mount Sinai Medical School in Manhattan, he took a prescription pad from another physician's assistant with whom he worked. SCHEIN filled over 50 prescriptions between January and May of 2011 by fraudulently listing his colleague as the prescriber. Five of the prescriptions are the subject of charges in the indictment. He also wrote over 20 prescriptions to WEISSMAN, unlawfully prescribing without the proper supervision required by law. Nine of these prescriptions are the subject of charges in the indictment. SCHEIN subsequently lost his job at Mount Sinai.

By June 2011, SCHEIN had found another job at the office of a family medicine practitioner in Inwood, New York, and once again stole prescription pads. SCHEIN forged the name of the family practitioner and wrote out over 70 prescriptions between June and December of 2011. Eleven of these prescriptions are the subject of charges in the indictment.

In December 2011, pharmacy staff in the Upper East Side grew suspicious upon receiving one of SCHEIN's prescriptions and contacted the family practitioner, whose name appeared as the prescriber. SCHEIN lost his job after this physician learned of the fraudulent prescriptions. Officials at Duane Reade/Walgreens also became aware of WEISSMAN's criminal activity with SCHEIN and terminated her in February 2012.

INDICTED DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Eric Schein 06/06/1985 400 E. 71st Street, Apt. 9I, New York, NY	Conspiracy 4th – 1 ct CSPCS – 9 cts CPCS 3rd – 9 cts Forgery 2nd – 16 cts Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument 2nd – 10 cts
Perri Weissman 07/29/1985 400 E. 71st Street, Apt. 9I, New York, NY 10021	Conspiracy 4th – 1 ct CPCS 3rd – 15 cts Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument 2nd – 6 cts

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