

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

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Heroin packaging operation dismantled in Inwood: Over \$5 million in heroin seized, 10 arrests

100s of stamps with brand names, including "SINCOME TAX"

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, James J. Hunt, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division, New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton, and Chief Security Officer Thomas Belfiore and Superintendent of Police Michael Fedorko, both of Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, announced the arrests of 10 members of a major drug trafficking operation in the Inwood section of Manhattan. Approximately 10 kilograms of heroin (22 lbs.), including five kilograms of powdered heroin and 150,000 individual dose glassine envelopes were seized in a court authorized search of an apartment at 10 Park Terrace East, Apt. 4D.

As a result of a short-term investigation spearheaded by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Investigators Unit and Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT), with assistance from the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) 50th Precinct, the DEA's Long Island Division Office Task Force and the Port Authority Police, 10 heroin mill workers were arrested at approximately 7:40 p.m. yesterday. Investigators identified the location through intelligence and surveillance, and observed members of the drug ring entering and exiting the building.

The residential building, 10 Park Terrace East, overlooks the tranquil Bruce Reynolds Garden in Isham Park. The garden is named for a Port Authority Police officer who grew up in the neighborhood and died during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The investigation revealed that the drug operation began renting a three-bedroom apartment on the fourth floor, Apt. 4D, in July 2015 for approximately \$3,700 per month.

When the team of approximately 30 investigators, agents and detectives arrived to conduct the court authorized search yesterday evening, they interrupted the heroin packaging operation in full swing. Mill workers were engaged in processing the heroin and filling tiny bags for retail distribution, with

approximately 150,000 glassine envelopes already filled. These were packed into a suitcase and also piled in mounds on a tabletop. Each bag sells for up to \$10 in New York City.

More than a dozen coffee grinders, which are used to mix heroin with diluting agents, were in use. The air was thick with heroin and a powdered layer coated the wall moldings and other surfaces in the apartment. Also present were bags of packaging material, scales, face masks, gloves and other equipment, as well as business records compiled by the drug ring.

Windows were covered by towels and approximately five window air conditioner units were in use, a hallmark of heroin mills. The apartment was wired with counter-surveillance equipment, including cameras focused on the street in front of the building and the building's entrance.

The operation employed hundreds of stamps in branding the glassine envelopes. Some of the brand names used were "INCOME TAX," "FENDI," "PAINKILLER," "BATMAN" and "SUPERMAN." At least one brand was identified as having been sold recently on Long Island.

Three criminal complaints filed by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT) charge the defendants with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree. Arraignments are expected later today in Manhattan Criminal Court, 100 Centre Street.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked SNP's Investigators Unit and Heroin Interdiction Team (HIT), the NYPD, the Port Authority Police Department and the DEA's Long Island District Office Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of agents and officers from the DEA, Nassau County District Attorney's Office, Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, Suffolk County Police Department, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office and Hempstead Police Department.

DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Gaspar Mendoza-Sanchez Bronx, NY 9/9/1998	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Manuel Rivera Bronx, NY 8/20/1986	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Jose Brito NY, NY 7/26/1965	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Freddy Rivera NY, NY 1/20/1981	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
George Rivera Rivera NY, NY 1/9/1987	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Carlos Rivera Bronx, NY 9/1/1983	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Steve Mendoza NY, NY 2/26/1993	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Cortoreal Rivera NY, NY 8/4/1991	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts

Christopher Ortiz-Ocasta	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
Philadelphia, PA	CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
2/15/1979	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Gittel Pichardo	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
NY, NY	CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
4/17/1984	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts

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