



Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor For the City of New York  
Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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**Contacts:**

Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office  
Kati Cornell  
(212) 815-0525

DEA New York Division  
Erin Mulvey  
(212) 337-2906

New York City Police Department  
Phillip Walzak  
(646) 610-6700

New York State Police  
Kristin Lowman  
(518) 457-2180

**Dangerous Fentanyl Masked as Counterfeit Oxycodone: 20,000 Pills  
Seized in the Bronx and Manhattan**

***New Yorkers Cautioned Against Purchasing Black Market Prescription Pills***

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Ray Donovan, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division, New York City Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill and New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett announced the seizure of 20,000 pills of counterfeit oxycodone suspected to contain fentanyl and two kilograms of heroin (over 4 ½ pounds) over the past week as a result of two investigations. The pills carry a street value of up to \$600,000. Counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl, a potentially lethal synthetic opioid, are increasingly appearing on the black market in New York City.

Four defendants are charged in criminal complaints filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor. The arrests are a result of two investigations by the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF) Group T-12, which is comprised of agents and officers from the DEA New York Division, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the New York State Police. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department assisted in the investigation.

On February 7, 2019, agents and officers were conducting surveillance as part of an ongoing investigation centered on a suspected narcotics trafficker, ANDRES REYES-MARTINEZ, when they observed him entering and exiting a cellphone store at 155-B West Kingsbridge Road in the Fordham Manor neighborhood of the Bronx.

The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor secured a search warrant for the location and agents and officers entered the cellphone store at approximately 5:50 p.m. REYES-MARTINEZ and a second individual, JESUS GARCIA, were the only people present inside the store at the time. GARCIA, the purported owner of the cellphone store, stood behind the counter and was in conversation with REYES-MARTINEZ.

Above the first floor retail area, agents and officers found a second floor storage area and recovered approximately 14,000 small blue tablets stamped "M30" that closely matched the color and markings of

prescription oxycodone. The pills were split between 14 bags, each holding approximately 1,000 pills, and are suspected to contain fentanyl. Police also recovered two brick-shaped packages wrapped in duct tape, each weighing approximately one kilogram, containing a tan powdery substance with the characteristics and appearance of heroin. The store is located in a busy commercial area in close proximity to the Kingsbridge Armory.

Four days earlier, on February 3, 2019, agents and officers made a similar seizure after conducting surveillance on a livery car heading southbound on the FDR Drive. Agents and officers stopped the vehicle in which defendants DAVID ESPINAL and VICTOR ALMANZAR-CARDENAS were traveling in the vicinity of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and East 49<sup>th</sup> Street.

ESPINAL had a large object in his pocket and began flailing his arms, refusing to be handcuffed. Agents and officers recovered the object, which proved to be a large clear plastic bag containing approximately 6,000 pills. The pills were blue in color and were stamped "M30," markings consistent with oxycodone. Subsequent laboratory analysis revealed that the pills contained fentanyl.

The fentanyl pills recovered in these investigations are believed to have originated in Mexico. A highly potent synthetic opioid, fentanyl is cheaper to obtain than pharmaceutical-grade opioid prescription pills and much more deadly.

Overdose deaths in New York City are at record-high levels and fentanyl is involved in more than half of these fatalities. A customer accustomed to taking oxycodone would not necessarily have the tolerance to be able to ingest fentanyl without suffering an overdose.

Black market 30 mg oxycodone pills can sell on the street for up to \$30 each. At that price, the combined total number of pills recovered in these investigations could have carried a street value of up to \$600,000.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked her office's Special Investigations Bureau (SIB), Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New York Division, the New York City Police Department, the New York State Police and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department.

"If you take 'prescription' pills that did not come directly from a pharmacy, you are risking your life," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Brennan. "Throughout New York City, we have seen a spate of cases involving tens of thousands of potentially lethal fentanyl pills masquerading as oxycodone. Just because black market pills have the same color and design as legitimate pills, it does not mean they are safe. The ingredients and potency are all unknown, and minuscule amounts of fentanyl can cause overdose or death. Consuming a counterfeit pill is akin to playing Russian Roulette."

"These arrests highlight a growing trend in illicit street drugs which increases the risk of drug overdose," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan. "Traffickers are mass producing pseudo-pharmaceutical pills made of heroin, fentanyl and other illicit drugs in makeshift laboratories throughout New York City. These pills attract users because they are more convenient and less conspicuous; but users should beware because they are unregulated and lethal. DEA and our law enforcement partners are committed to removing such threats and arresting drug dealers, traffickers and manufacturers."

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill said, "NYPD detectives continue to work tirelessly to hold those responsible who traffic opioids and fentanyl into our communities and contribute to related overdoses that have brought devastation to countless families. We will continue to work closely with our federal, state and local partners to stop this type of criminal activity. I commend the investigators who put themselves in harm's way to remove these dangerous narcotics from the streets of New York."

Acting New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett said, "I applaud the collaborative work of our New York State Police members and law enforcement partners at all levels for their relentless efforts to keep illegal drugs off our streets. These charges and the seizure of these lethal drugs are the result of their hard work and commitment to aggressively target and pursue criminals who perpetuate the distribution of these dangerous narcotics and the criminal activities associated with them. Together, we will continue to work diligently to prevent the flow of these illegal drugs into our communities before they threaten the safety and security of our neighborhoods."

<b>Defendants</b>	<b>Charges</b>
Andres Reyes-Martinez Bronx, NY 3/5/1974	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 2 cts
Jesus Garcia Bronx, NY 4/5/1984	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 2 cts
David Espinal New York, NY 9/19/1992	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 2 cts Resisting Arrest – 1 ct
Victor Almanzar-Cardenas Boston, MA 1/2/1980	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 1 ct

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