



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

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**\$7 Million Worth of "Fire" Branded Heroin/Fentanyl Seized in Bronx
Packaging Mill: Six Individuals Charged**

Narcotics destined for distribution in New York City and New England

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 Dermot F. Shea, New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett and Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced the arrests of six individuals in connection with a large-scale alleged narcotics packaging and distribution network operating in the Kingsbridge neighborhood of the Bronx.

A long-term investigation into narcotics trafficking in New York City and Massachusetts culminated in the seizure of approximately 750,000 glassine envelopes of suspected heroin/fentanyl from an apartment at 2559 Sedgwick Avenue during a court authorized search.

As a result of intelligence developed during a long-term investigation, members of the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF), Group T-12, and investigators with the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) conducted several days of intensive physical and video surveillance at the seven-story residential building. Over the course of the weekend, agents and investigators observed a total of eight individuals coming to and from 2559 Sedgwick Avenue, Apt. 6A, the suspected narcotics packaging mill. Agents and officers recognized multiple suspects from prior surveillance operations entering Apt. 6A.

Beginning on Friday, January 24, 2020, agents and investigators observed these eight individuals enter 2559 Sedgwick Ave., Apt. 6A carrying furnishings and equipment that are typically used in packaging heroin and fentanyl, including a glass table, plastic containers, desk lamps and folding chairs. On Saturday, January, 25, 2020, individuals were observed carrying weighted black plastic garbage bags into Apt. 6A. A female carried 15 bags of groceries into the building and into the apartment.

On Monday, January 27, 2020, members of NYDETF and the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor obtained a court authorized search warrant for 2559 Sedgwick Avenue, Apt. 6A. When agents and

officers entered the apartment at approximately 7:25 p.m., they discovered six individuals in the midst of packaging powder-filled glassine envelopes stamped with the brand “Fire” into bundles.

Hundreds of thousands of glassine envelopes covered two table tops and overflowed from plastic bins and cardboard boxes on the floor and a bed. Equipment and paraphernalia typical of a heroin/fentanyl mill were present in the room, including a glass table, desk lamps, a scale, grinders, empty glassine envelopes, small spoons, an ink bottle, ink pads and stamps.

Defendants LIVO VALDEZ, JASLIN BALDERA, FREDERICK BALDERA, FRANDI LEDEMA DIEGO TEJADA and PAFRAIMY ANTONIO are charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree. The defendants are scheduled for arraignment this evening in Manhattan Criminal Court.

The DEA estimates the black market value of the suspected heroin/fentanyl at approximately \$7million. Results of laboratory analysis of the seized narcotics are pending. The narcotics are believed to have been destined for New York City and Massachusetts.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and commended SNP’s Special Investigations Bureau and Investigators Unit and the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, including members of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York City Police Department and the New York State Police, for their work on the case. The DEA’s New England Division assisted in the investigation.

“The sheer volume of heroin and fentanyl packages assembled in a small apartment just off the Major Deegan Expressway in the Bronx is shocking. Even veteran narcotics investigators were surprised by the output of this packaging operation, which was run out of a nondescript apartment in the borough afflicted by the city’s highest rate of overdose death,” said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan. “The arrests of six individuals, and seizure of 750,000 drug filled envelopes destined for distribution here and in New England, underscore New York City’s role as a hub for mass distribution of deadly drugs. I thank the Drug Enforcement Task Force and the investigators and prosecutors from the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their dedication and commitment to preventing lethal drugs from ever reaching our communities.”

“This enforcement operation shows that heroin is still the neighborhood stalker bringing danger and death to our doorsteps,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan. “This seizure is incredibly significant because it has saved hundreds of thousands of people from starting a cycle of opioid addiction by removing three quarters of a million heroin filled glassines from a one-bedroom apartment in the Bronx. Great police work and a common goal go a long way in keeping our city safe from the dangers of illegal drugs.”

“I want to commend our NYPD officers and partners in the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their dedicated work together to make these arrests and take these dangerous drugs off the streets,” said Police Commissioner Dermot Shea.

New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett said, “The hard work of our members and partners on the Drug Enforcement Task Force has led to the arrests of six subjects and the seizure of a significant amount of heroin and fentanyl, which would have ended up on our streets. There is zero tolerance for those who sell these deadly, illegal drugs, and we will continue to aggressively target and disrupt these trafficking organizations, and put those responsible behind bars.”

Defendants	Charges
Livo Valdez Bronx, NY 4/20/1994	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Jaslin Baldera Passaic, NJ	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct

6/17/1995	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Frederick Baldera New York, NY	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
6/30/1996	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Frandi Ledema Bronx, NY	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
10/8/1996	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Diego Tejada Bronx, NY	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
10/21/1998	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Pafraimy Antonio Bronx, NY	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
5/20/1998	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts

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