



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

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snpnyc.org
@snpnyc

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
Richard Esposito
(646) 610-6700

Large Scale Narcotics Pill Manufacturing Operation Dismantled in a Residential Building in the Bronx

Three Pill Press Machines Recovered from Basement Drug Lab that also Contained a Coop of Dozens of Roosters and Chickens

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New York Division Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan and New York City Police Commissioner Dermot F. Shea announced the arrests of two individuals in connection with an alleged narcotics pill production and distribution operation located in the Highbridge neighborhood of the Bronx.

A surveillance operation centered on defendant Jeison LEBRON, an alleged drug manufacturer and distributor, led officers, agents and investigators with the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South Overdose Squad, DEA Group D-24 and Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Investigators Unit to uncover a basement pill manufacturing operation at 136 W. 170th Street in Highbridge on the night of June 19, 2020.

A court authorized search revealed the basement drug laboratory was outfitted with three industrial pill press machines, used to form counterfeit pills from illicit drugs. Also seized during the search were approximately 1.2 kilograms of suspected heroin (over 2 ½ pounds), 34 grams of suspected fentanyl and approximately 2.3 kilograms of methamphetamine (5 pounds), including a pound of crystal meth and approximately 1,600 blue methamphetamine pills. Agents and officers were surprised to also discover 30 to 50 roosters and chickens of a breed believed to be used in cockfighting.

A criminal complaint filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor on Saturday, June 20, 2020, charges LEBRON and defendant Alfredo GORIS with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First, Second and Third Degrees, and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree.

In events leading up to the search, on June 17, 2020 agents learned that three suspicious packages weighing more than 280 pounds, and purported to contain "roll-forming machines," or pill presses, had originated in China and were addressed to 626 10th Street, Apartment 5, in Union City, N.J.

On June 17 and June 18, agents and officers observed LEBRON accept delivery of these packages at 626 10th Street, Apartment 5, in Union City, and bring the packages into the residence with hand trucks. LEBRON subsequently loaded a heavy blue barrel into the back of a grey Acura vehicle. Surveillance teams followed LEBRON as he drove the Acura back to New York City.

Agents and officers tracked LEBRON to 136 W. 170th Street, a five-story brick apartment building. On June 17 and June 18, agents reviewed outdoor video footage of the cellar door at 136 W. 170th Street. Surveillance teams observed LEBRON and GORIS entering with heavy bags and suitcases. On June 19, at approximately 4:20 p.m. video footage showed LEBRON and GORIS bringing additional plastic bags into the location.

At approximately 10 p.m. on June 19, LEBRON and GORIS were detained as they exited 136 West 170th Street. The Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office assisted in obtaining a court authorized search warrant for the basement of that location.

Agents and investigators recovered the narcotics, three industrial pill presses, and other drug paraphernalia, including unused glassine envelopes, Ziploc bags, scales, packaging materials, and dilutants used for mixing narcotic drugs or stimulants.

Counterfeit pills pressed from illicit drugs have been linked to overdose deaths nationwide. Seizure of illicitly produced pills began to surge in New York City in 2018. The defendants in this case are not charged in connection with overdose deaths.

Subsequent to the court authorized search, LEBRON and GORIS were arrested. The two were arraigned over the weekend in Manhattan Criminal Court. GORIS was released without bail. LEBRON was held in custody to appear for a bail hearing in a prior case at Manhattan Supreme Court.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan commended the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South Overdose Squad, DEA Group D-24 and her office's Trial Division and Investigators Unit for their work on the investigation.

"This is the first time our office has seen an illegal pill production operation of this scale, with three active pill presses," said Bridget G. Brennan. "The lethal combination of heroin, fentanyl and methamphetamine, disguised as familiar pills, would have put unsuspecting users at grave risk of overdose."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan said, "Over the weekend, two people were charged for their role in a pill pressing scheme that had the capability to produce mass quantities of synthetic drug-filled capsules. This operation was a ticking time bomb with the capability of highly dangerous controlled substances distributed to unsuspecting users, increasing the risk of overdoses and fatalities. I applaud Group D-24 and our partners at the New York City Police Department and the New York City Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their diligent investigation."

Criminal Complaint

Charges

Alfredo Goris	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
Bronx, NY	CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct
Age: 27	CPCS 3 rd – 2 cts
	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 3 cts
Jeison Lebron	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
New York, NY	CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct
Age: 28	CPCS 3 rd – 2 cts
	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 3 cts

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