



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

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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## Indictment Charges Man for Trafficking Dangerous, Unusual Drug Mixtures of Heroin, Fentanyl, Tramadol and Methamphetamine

*Nearly four pounds of narcotics and packaging equipment recovered from maintenance area of residential building near public school in Fordham Heights*

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Ray Donovan, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New York Division, New York City Police Commissioner Dermot F. Shea, Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York, and New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett announced today the indictment and arrest of an individual accused of trafficking in multi-kilogram quantities of opioids and methamphetamine mixed together in highly unusual and potentially lethal combinations.

An indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) charges JUAN PEREZ-PICHARDO with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First, Second, Third and Fifth Degrees and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree. The indictment was unsealed this afternoon at an arraignment before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Ann E. Scherzer in Part 93.

PEREZ-PICHARDO was arrested on August 13, 2020 by members of the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, Group Z-13, following a court authorized search of his basement apartment at 2400 Walton Avenue. The six-story residential building is located in Fordham Heights on the same block as a public elementary school.

The New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force is comprised of agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York, the New York State Police, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Marshals Service, New York National Guard, the Clarkstown Police Department, U.S. Coast Guard, Port Washington Police Department and New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision. The Strike Force is partially funded by the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), which is a federally supported crime fighting initiative and part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program.

When agents and officers arrived at 2400 Walton Avenue, they entered through the rear courtyard area of the apartment building and observed a sign posted on the door of the target apartment indicating a storage/maintenance area. PEREZ-PICHARDO was inside the apartment.

During the search, agents and investigators discovered a hidden compartment carved into the wall of a shower area, located adjacent to the kitchen. The compartment contained multiple brick-shaped packages of a brown powdery substance. Another brick-shaped package wrapped in a comforter was found in a bedroom closet. In total, nearly four pounds of suspected narcotics were recovered, as well as 10 bottles of liquid ketamine (a general anesthetic), quinine (an anti-malaria agent) and \$1,000 cash.

Subsequent testing by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) Laboratory determined that two of the brick-shaped packages contained a mixture of heroin, fentanyl and tramadol (all opioids) and methamphetamine (a stimulant). A third brick contained heroin, fentanyl and tramadol.

The dangerous and highly unusual combination of opioids with a stimulant could easily cause an unsuspecting user to overdose. Moreover, at least half of all overdose deaths in New York City involve illicit fentanyl, which is approximately 50 times stronger than heroin. The seizure in this case came at a time when drug fatalities reached an all-time high across the country due to aggravating factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The apartment also contained all of the equipment necessary to mix the substances, including a kilo press, scales, grinder, ink pads, stamps and thousands of empty individual-dose glassine envelopes. The drugs seized could have yielded at least 50,000 individual doses worth approximately \$500,000 on the street.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and commended SNP's Special Investigations Bureau and all of the agencies involved in the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force, including DEA New York Division, the NYPD, HSI New York and the New York State Police, for their work on the case.

"The excellent investigative work of attorneys and law enforcement officers undoubtedly saved lives. We seized large quantities of a substance with highly lethal potential – a combination of highly potent stimulants mixed with powerful narcotics - and all the equipment needed to put 50,000 stamped bags filled with it out on the street for sale," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan.

“A concealed compartment in an apartment wall held a highly dangerous mixture of opioids and stimulants, something we are seeing more and more of these days,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan. “Drug traffickers are monopolizing on the potency of fentanyl by mixing it with other controlled substances. We have seen fentanyl mixed with heroin, mixed with cocaine, and now being mixed with meth, heroin and tramadol. This is a warning to users that what you think is one drug, when in fact it could be a toxic cocktail.”

“Our work in this case prevented a tremendous amount of illegal narcotics from flooding into our city’s streets. I commend our NYPD detectives and all of our law enforcement partners for their ongoing efforts to stop the distribution of these deadly drugs,” said Police Commissioner Dermot Shea.

“With a half million dollars’ worth of narcotics hidden throughout his apartment, Perez-Pichardo is alleged to have had enough stashed for fifty thousand potential lethal overdoses. These are deadly drugs, made even deadlier by the substances these traffickers were allegedly adding to this “home brew” of narcotics,” said Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of HSI New York. “HSI’s partnership with DEA, NYPD and all the Strike Force partners allows for a continuous flow of information in investigations which in turn takes deadly drugs of the street and out of the hands of our city’s most vulnerable.”

State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett said, “The collaborative work of law enforcement on this case has prevented a potentially deadly mix of narcotics from reaching our streets. This individual had no regard for the lives of those who would have used these dangerous drugs. I applaud our partners on the task force for their outstanding work in this case.”

<b>Defendant</b>	<b>Charges</b>
Juan Perez-Pichardo Bronx, NY Age: 50	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 cts CPCS 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 3 cts CPCS 5 <sup>th</sup> – 2 cts Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 cts

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