



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

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Thirteen Indicted in Sales of Heroin, Fentanyl and Cocaine: Upper East Side Fatal Overdose Sparked Investigation

Bronx Dealer Faces Charges of Reckless Endangerment for Knowingly Selling Potentially Lethal Fentanyl; Former NYPD Officer Charged in Narcotic Sales to Undercover Officer

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and New York City Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill announced today the arrest and indictment of 13 individuals on charges stemming from a conspiracy to distribute heroin, fentanyl and cocaine in Manhattan and the Bronx. The investigation was sparked by a fatal overdose in the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

Early this morning members of the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Manhattan North Major Case Team arrested the defendants as a result of a long-term wiretap investigation. Police recovered a .40 caliber gun and quantities of narcotics in a series of court authorized searches. The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Abraham Clott, Part 61, 111 Centre Street.

An indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) contains charges of Conspiracy in the Second and Fourth Degrees, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First, Second and Third Degrees, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First, Second and Third Degrees, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in or Near School Grounds, Criminal Sale of Marijuana in the Fourth Degree and Reckless Endangerment in the Second Degree. Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr. reviewed and submitted wiretap applications for court authorization.

The investigation began following the death of a 28-year-old man who fatally overdosed inside the restroom of a diner on York Avenue on the evening of January 22, 2018. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined the cause of death to be acute intoxication due to the combined effect of fentanyl, heroin and alprazolam. A glassine envelope of fentanyl-laced heroin was recovered from the scene of the fatal overdose. Fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid drug that is increasingly common on the black market and is responsible for more than half of all overdose deaths in New York City. As a result of the wiretap investigation, police uncovered a network of narcotics dealers and suppliers who allegedly conspired together to distribute narcotics in the Bronx and Manhattan.

At the outset of the investigation, police learned the overdose victim's friend and neighbor CHRISTOPHER WAGNER, who died during the course of the investigation, regularly obtained heroin, fentanyl and cocaine from JOSE JORGE, aka "CATAÑO," an alleged narcotics dealer in the Soundview

neighborhood of the Bronx. An undercover officer began making purchases of cocaine, heroin and fentanyl from CHRISTOPHER WAGNER while also unsuccessfully attempting to buy drugs directly from CATAÑO. CATAÑO told the undercover officer he was wary of selling narcotics to a new customer due to concerns about a possible police investigation into the death of the 28-year-old overdose victim.

Despite these purported concerns, CATAÑO allegedly continued to sell narcotics to CHRISTOPHER WAGNER. CHRISTOPHER WAGNER in turn agreed to sell narcotics to the undercover officer, who was instructed to drive to 425 White Plains Road in Soundview, CATAÑO's home at the time, and wait outside. Police observed CHRISTOPHER WAGNER's father, former police officer EDWARD WAGNER, serving as a driver for his son. EDWARD WAGNER retired from the NYPD in 1994. In this manner, CHRISTOPHER WAGNER made eight purchases from CATAÑO and sales to the undercover officer, including three sales involving fentanyl in March and April of 2018.

On June 12, 2018, CATAÑO spoke to the undercover officer by phone and informed the undercover officer that CHRISTOPHER WAGNER had died. CATAÑO agreed to meet the undercover officer the next day to complete a heroin sale that had been arranged by CHRISTOPHER WAGNER prior to his death. On June 13, 2018, CATAÑO sold heroin to the undercover officer in the vicinity of 415 Soundview Avenue. CATAÑO made seven subsequent sales to the undercover officer, including a sale of nearly five grams of fentanyl-laced heroin for \$660 on November 13, 2018.

During these sales, CATAÑO revealed that he viewed fentanyl as good for business, because while it gives a higher high, it also wears off faster. CATAÑO acknowledged the dangers of overdose, especially for those customers who had not used opioids recently or who were accustomed to heroin but not to fentanyl. However, CATAÑO claimed overdoses increased sales because when word spread, customers came looking for the same product.

In addition to charges of Conspiracy in the Second and Fourth Degrees, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First, Second and Third Degrees, CATAÑO faces four counts of Reckless Endangerment for the four alleged fentanyl sales – three to CHRISTOPHER WAGNER and one to the undercover officer.

On July 18, 2018, while continuing to make alleged sales to the undercover officer, CATAÑO provided EDWARD WAGNER's phone number to the undercover officer. Between July 24, 2018 and November 13, 2018, EDWARD WAGNER met with the undercover officer on seven dates. During those meetings he sold cocaine and heroin, two boxes of bullets, a ballistic vest and a shotgun and shotgun shells. Sales occurred inside EDWARD WAGNER's residence at 1540 York Avenue and in the immediate vicinity.

As a result of the wiretap investigation, police identified a chain of narcotics dealers and suppliers who allegedly conspired together to distribute narcotics in the Bronx and Manhattan. The defendants conducted a total of 23 sales of narcotics to the undercover officer for nearly \$35,000. As detailed in the indictment, JASON MORALES, of the Bronx, allegedly supplied narcotics to CATAÑO. Defendants KADDIER HERRANS-PAGAN and WILFREDO ROSARIO-VELEZ, aka "MAMOTA," allegedly provided kilogram quantities of cocaine to MORALES.

In the largest of these sales, which occurred on November 19, 2018, MORALES and CATAÑO provided approximately 98 grams of cocaine to the undercover officer in exchange for \$4,500. On January 16, 2019, CATAÑO allegedly removed nearly 70 grams of cocaine from under the gas flap of MORALES's vehicle and provided it to the undercover officer in exchange for \$3,080.

MORALES also allegedly supplied narcotics to defendants JOSE FELICIANO and MIGUEL SANTANA, aka "DOMI," of the Bronx, and JORGE ABAD, of Manhattan. FELICIANO in turn allegedly supplied heroin to CATAÑO and defendant JUAN RUIZ, of the Bronx. ABAD served as a supplier for EDWARD and CHRISTOPHER WAGNER and a network of street level drug dealers in Upper Manhattan.

This morning, police recovered a .40 caliber gun from RUIZ's residence, located at 1251 Bronx River Avenue in Soundview. Police also recovered ammunition from EDWARD WAGNER's residence at 1540

York Avenue and over \$100,000 cash and a quantity of narcotics from the home of ROSARIO-VELEZ. CATAÑO had a small amount of narcotics and packaging consistent with individual sales in his current residence at 1776 Lacombe Avenue in Soundview.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan commended the work of SNP’s Special Investigation Bureau and Investigators Unit, the NYPD’s Manhattan North Major Case Team and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., and thanked Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark.

“The conspiracy stretched from the South Bronx to the Upper East Side and involved widespread distribution of narcotics at a time when overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in New York City,” Special Narcotics Prosecutor Brennan said. “One member of the organization openly acknowledged that the fentanyl-laced heroin he sold increased the risk of death, but nonetheless he viewed fentanyl as good for business. We are committed to seeing that those who knowingly sell lethal narcotics are held accountable and punished appropriately upon conviction.”

Police Commissioner James P. O’Neill said, “The trafficking of narcotics in New York City will never be tolerated, neither by law enforcement nor by the people we serve. We are relentless in precisely targeting those who peddle these dangerous drugs and diminish the quality of life in our communities. I thank and commend the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Manhattan District Attorney, Bronx District Attorney, and all of the investigators whose efforts resulted in these arrests and indictments.”

Indictment	Charges
Jose Jorge, aka “Cataño” Bronx, NY 9/4/1972	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 4 cts CSCS 2 nd – 2 cts CSCS 3 rd – 10 cts Reckless Endangerment 2 nd – 4 cts
Jason Morales Bronx, NY 12/14/1983	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 2 cts CPCS 1 st – 3 cts CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct
Kaddier Herrans-Pagan Bronx, NY 11/15/1982	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 2 cts
Wilfredo Rosario-Velez, aka “Mamota” Bronx, NY 3/10/1985	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 2 cts
Miguel Santana, aka “Domi” Bronx, NY 12/2/1963	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
Jose Feliciano Bronx, NY 11/4/1983	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 2 cts CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct
Juan Ruiz Bronx, NY 9/8/1987	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 1 ct

Angel Colon, aka "Bebo" New York, NY 9/6/1976	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
Jorge Abad New York, NY 8/17/1976	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 5 cts CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CSCS 3 rd – 1 ct
Edward Wagner New York, NY 3/21/1954	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 2 cts CSCS 3 rd – 2 cts
Angel Ramirez New York, NY 9/1/1991	Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct CSCS 3 rd – 1 ct CSCS in or Near School Grounds – 1 ct Criminal Sale of Marijuana 4 th – 1 ct
Rene Borrero New York, NY 1/30/1965	Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct
Andy Torres New York, NY 2/4/1997	Conspiracy 4 th – 1 ct Criminal Sale of Marijuana 4 th – 3 cts

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