



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

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Contacts:

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

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

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

Beau Duffy
New York State Police
(518) 457-2180

\$5 Million Worth of Heroin Intercepted En Route to New York City and Northeast: El Chapo Brand Recovered

250,000 Ready for Use Heroin Glassines and Three Kilograms in the Bronx

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, New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett and Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced the seizure of three kilograms of suspected heroin and more than 250,000 individually packaged glassine envelopes destined for distribution on New York City streets and in the Northeast.

On July 16, 2019, members of the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (DETF) and investigators with the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) were conducting surveillance in the vicinity of Wallace Avenue and Boston Road, Bronx, NY as part of an ongoing opioid investigation. At approximately 8:40 p.m., DETF Group T-12 and SNP investigators observed a black Toyota Corolla sedan bearing Massachusetts license plates parked near 3039 Wallace Avenue, Bronx, N.Y. A man then exited 3039 Wallace Avenue and placed a large weighted shopping bag inside the vehicle.

At approximately 8:40 p.m., Group T-12 conducted a vehicle stop on the black Toyota Corolla. As members of Group T-12 approached the vehicle, they saw a large shopping bag on the floor of the back seat of the vehicle with a large number of packages consistent with heroin glassines visible. The driver of the vehicle, LUIS CARMONA-ILARRAZA was placed under arrest and the bag was found to contain approximately 70,000 individually packaged glassine envelopes containing white powder.

On July 17, 2019, agents and investigators reviewed surveillance video of 3039 Wallace Avenue which showed a man, later identified as JOSEPH MEDINA-HIDALGO, give a second man, later identified as AMAURY LORA-GRULLON, a large suitcase. LORA-GRULLON then placed the suitcase in the trunk of a 2013 black Toyota Camry outside of the apartment building. LORA-GRULLON entered the vehicle and left the location. At approximately 3:10 p.m. agents and investigators executed a vehicle stop on the Camry and executed a search warrant obtained by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor.

Approximately 17,000 individually packaged glassines of heroin were found inside the suitcase in the trunk of the vehicle. LORA-GRULLON was placed under arrest.

At approximately 3:20 p.m. agents and officers executed a search warrant at 3039 Wallace Avenue, Apt. 4D. DETF, Group T-12 and SNP investigators dismantled a fully functioning heroin mill that contained three kilograms of heroin, an estimated 170,000 glassines of milled and packaged heroin.

A substantial amount of packaging equipment was also recovered, including numerous grinders used to process the heroin, packaging materials and 47 various stamps. Stamps were used to brand the heroin with a variety of names, including El Chapo, Dunkin Donuts, Exit 4, Rolex, T Mobile, NBA, Coca-Cola, Sleep Walking, Peter Rabbit, Superman, Hello Kitty, iPhone, KTM and Black Hand.

Glassine envelopes of heroin were piled on tables, in bags and on the floor. Most of the glassines were already bundled into rectangular packages that were wrapped in white paper and plastic according to brand name, ready for delivery on the street. Three kilograms in brick form were found in bags wrapped in cellophane.

The DEA estimated that the black market value of the suspected heroin at approximately \$5 million. Results of laboratory analysis of the seized narcotics are pending.

MEDINA-HIDALGO is scheduled for arraignment today in Manhattan Criminal Court. LORA-GRULLON and CARMONA-ILARRAZA were previously arraigned and entered not guilty pleas.

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 successful investigation announced today disrupted the flow of millions of dollars' worth of heroin to our city and region," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan. "Undoubtedly, the tenacity and commitment demonstrated by the agents, investigators and attorneys who worked on this case saved lives and resulted in the arrest and apprehension of individuals who seek to profit from the misery of others. Reducing the supply of lethal addictive narcotics remains our most effective prevention tool."

"Evident in the various stamps used to brand their heroin, this organization catered to numerous dealers in New York City and the Northeast," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan. "'Hello kitty', 'Rolex' and 'NBA' are just three popular brands used by the organization to stamp their product and lure users throughout New York City. Other stamps included an all too timely 'El Chapo' stamp, and a stamp bearing 'Exit 4', both of which were found in the heroin mill. 'Exit 4' is significant because it is the exit off the Massachusetts Turnpike destined to Springfield, MA where one of the defendants is from, indicating the organization's reach outside of New York and into the Northeast. I applaud the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the Bronx District Attorney's Office for their collaboration in this investigation."

"Today's charges demonstrate that the investigative efforts of New York City law enforcement are far-reaching, precisely-focused, and patient. As long as individuals are involved in illegal narcotics trafficking, the NYPD and our partners will relentlessly work to stop the threat to public safety. I commend and thank the NYPD detectives involved in this investigation as well as our colleagues at the Drug Enforcement Administration, New York State Police, Bronx District Attorney's Office and the city's Special Narcotics Prosecutor," said Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill.

New York State Police Superintendent Keith M. Corlett said, "Our streets are safer with these suspects and dangerous drugs off of our streets. Through excellent police work, we have dismantled an organization that had no regard for the well-being or safety of our communities, and were only driven by their own greed. These drugs kill. We will continue to partner with law enforcement to keep these dangerous substances and the crime that comes with them out of New York."

Defendants	Charges
Amaury Lora-Grullon Bronx, NY 1/12/1984	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct
Joseph Medina-Hidalgo Bronx, NY 11/15/2000	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 2 cts
Luis Carmona-Illarraza Springfield, MA 2/18/1995	CPCS 1 st – 1 ct

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