

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

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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High-volume trafficker supplied drug dealers in Manhattan clubs and Bushwick, Brooklyn: Five charged in narcotics conspiracy and sales

*Packages from Puerto Rico contained \$225,000 in cocaine disguised as children's
birthday gifts*

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton and Philip R. Bartlett, Inspector-in-Charge of the New York Office of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), announced today the arrest of five individuals, including a high-level drug trafficker based in Harlem, ALBERT FORTOSA, who arranged for bulk shipments of cocaine to be sent via U.S. Postal Service express mail from Puerto Rico to New York City. Five intercepted packages each contained a kilogram of cocaine (over 2 lbs.) concealed in gift-wrapped boxes and packed alongside children's toys.

The defendants were arrested as a result of a long-term wiretap investigation by the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Vice City Wide Club Enforcement and the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. FORTOSA was arrested as he allegedly accepted delivery of a package on July 2, 2015. The other defendants were arrested on August 4, 2015, including DANIEL REYES, a drug delivery service operator based in Bushwick, Brooklyn, DERRICK SANTANA, who allegedly sold drugs in nightclubs in Manhattan and Brooklyn, as well as other locations, and JOSEPH OWENS, who worked closely with FORTOSA. Both REYES and SANTANA are charged in connection with sales to undercover NYPD officers.

A 71-count indictment contains charges of Conspiracy, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance and Resisting Arrest.

FORTOSA pled not guilty at an arraignment in Manhattan Supreme Court last week, where bail was set at \$250,000. REYES, SANTANA and OWENS also pled not guilty and were remanded pending bail arguments. REYES is scheduled to appear today before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Bruce Allen, Part 45, at 111 Centre St. SANTANA and OWENS are scheduled to appear on Thursday.

During the investigation, which began in September 2014, the defendants sold drugs to undercover officers with the NYPD's Vice Squad on 20 occasions. At the outset of the investigation, detectives learned that SANTANA was a club dealer. Court authorized wiretaps enabled police to identify REYES as a source of supply for SANTANA. REYES operated a drug delivery service and sold cocaine, heroin, MDMA and prescription drugs, including oxycodone and Xanax.

Further investigation led investigators to FORTOSA, who was at the top of the supply chain for cocaine, and who also sold heroin, MDMA and marijuana. With the assistance of OWENS, FORTOSA arranged for sizeable quantities of cocaine to be mailed from Puerto Rico to New York City. The wiretap investigation revealed that FORTOSA traveled to Puerto Rico immediately prior to the packages being sent to New York.

Within the span of approximately two weeks, between June 15 and July 2, U.S. Postal inspectors seized five packages that contained cocaine and were allegedly bound for FORTOSA's organization. Packages were address to fictitious names and individuals outside of the narcotics organization. The five kilograms of cocaine carried a combined street value of up to \$225,000.

FORTOSA was arrested on July 2 at 230 West 111th St. as he accepted delivery of an express mail package that had the appearance of a child's birthday gift, but actually concealed a kilogram of cocaine. The package was addressed to another individual. Inside was a gift bag with a stuffed toy Minion and two boxes covered in "happy birthday" wrapping paper. The gift wrapped boxes held the kilogram of cocaine.

When confronted by police, FORTOSA dropped the package containing the cocaine and tried to flee the building, flailing at officers. In addition to drug charges, the indictment charges FORTOSA with one count of Resisting Arrest.

Two similar packages, each with a kilogram of cocaine disguised as a child's birthday gift, were intercepted that same day, and another two on June 15 and June 24. All four of these packages were seized by U.S. Postal inspectors prior to delivery. The kilograms of cocaine were placed inside wireless internet router boxes and the majority of the packages also contained a stuffed Olaf doll.

Additionally, during the investigation the defendants made 20 sales of narcotics and other drugs to NYPD undercover officers in exchange for more than \$41,000. SANTANA made \$17,095 in sales to undercover officers. These sales took place in Manhattan's Lower East Side and in Brooklyn.

REYES sold \$24,660 in cocaine, heroin, MDMA and prescription drugs to undercover NYPD officers. In the largest sale of the investigation, on May 31, 2015 REYES sold 100 grams of cocaine, 100 individual dose glassine envelopes of heroin and 50 Xanax pills to an undercover officer for a total of \$6,900.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "This investigation began in nightclubs across New York City and ultimately led to the arrest of a major narcotics supplier, who obtained multiple shipments of cocaine from Puerto Rico via the U.S. Mail. Kilos of cocaine were disguised as children's birthday gifts, and shipped alongside innocent looking Olaf dolls and other toys, in a failed attempt to conceal the sinister contents. I congratulate the NYPD's Vice Squad, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and Assistant District Attorneys in my office's Trial Division for their excellent work on this case."

"I would like to thank the investigators of the NYPD's Vice City Wide Club Enforcement, the prosecutors of the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the members U.S. Postal Service for holding these individuals responsible for allegedly distributing large amounts of narcotics, and intercepting these drugs before they could reach the streets of New York City," said Police Commissioner William J. Bratton.

Inspector in Charge Philip R. Bartlett said, "We simply cannot and will not allow drug trafficking organizations to use our nations mail system to facilitate the transport of illegal drugs. Together with our law enforcement partners we will put a stop to these criminal enterprises."

INDICTED DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Albert Fortosa 456 9 th Avenue, Apt. 11 New York, NY 11/1/1970	Conspiracy 2 nd (CSCS 1 st & 2 nd) – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 2 cts CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct CSCS 5 th – 1 ct CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct Attempted CPCS 1 st – 4 cts Attempted CPCS 3 rd – 4 cts Resisting Arrest – 1 ct
Joseph Owens 1330 5th Avenue New York, NY 3/30/1971	Conspiracy 2 nd (CSCS 1 st & 2 nd) – 1 ct CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct Attempted CPCS 1 st – 5 cts Attempted CPCS 3 rd – 5 cts
Daniel Reyes 105 Troutman Street, Apt. 4A Brooklyn, NY 2/4/1989	Conspiracy 2 nd (CSCS 1 st & 2 nd) – 1 ct Conspiracy 5 th (CSCS 5 th) – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 3 cts CSCS 2 nd – 2 cts CSCS 3 rd – 11 cts CSCS 5 th – 6 ct CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct CPCS 3 rd – 5 cts
Derek Santana 130 3rd Avenue Brooklyn, NY 10/29/1989	Conspiracy 2 nd (CSCS 1 st & 2 nd) – 1 ct CSCS 1 st – 1 ct CSCS 2 nd – 3 cts CSCS 3 rd – 9 cts CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct CPCS 4 th – 1 ct
Mallory Claudio 1591 Park Avenue, Apt. 10E New York, NY 9/7/1986	Conspiracy 2 nd (CSCS 1 st & 2 nd) – 1 ct

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