

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

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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Three indicted for narcotics sales: Manhattan College and Brooklyn College

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, and New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton announced today the indictment of three defendants for their roles in two separate narcotics trafficking schemes related to Manhattan College, a private college in the Fieldston section of the Bronx, and Brooklyn College, a City University of New York (CUNY) school located in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

A confidential complaint from a member of the Manhattan College community led the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Narcotics Borough Bronx to initiate an investigation into an individual believed to be selling narcotics to students in February 2015. The investigation revealed that VICTOR VIGNIERO was selling drugs to students and other customers at an apartment near the Manhattan College campus. Following a dozen sales to undercover officers, police arrested VIGNIERO and his supplier, OSVALDO ESPAILLAT, on August 13, 2015. The defendants are charged in two separate indictments. Both are scheduled to be arraigned this morning before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice James Burke, Part 22, 111 Centre St., room 948.

In an unrelated investigation, a maintenance worker at Brooklyn College, JAVON HIGH, was indicted in connection with nine sales of cocaine to undercover officers with the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South between April 3, 2015 and July 7, 2015. Several of the sales took place in front of Brooklyn College's James Hall. HIGH was arrested on July 23, 2015 and arraigned on an indictment on August 26, 2015.

Manhattan College investigation

VICTOR VIGNIERO and OSVALDO ESPAILLAT are scheduled to be arraigned today on charges contained in two separate indictments filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor. Between February 26, 2015 and August 13, 2015, members of the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Bronx purchased and seized approximately half a kilogram of cocaine (over a pound) from the defendants.

During the long-term investigation, police identified VICTOR VIGNIERO as a drug dealer who sold narcotics from an apartment near the Manhattan College campus. VIGNIERO is charged in connection with nine sales of cocaine to an undercover officer, as well as sales of marijuana, for \$6,680. The majority of the sales took place inside a basement apartment at 3422 Irwin Avenue, where VIGNIERO resides.

VIGNIERO initially sold cocaine for an inflated price of \$80 per gram. In the largest sale to this undercover officer, on May 28, 2015, VIGNIERO sold over 60 grams of cocaine for \$2,220 dollars at a bulk rate of \$37 per gram.

Prior to some sales, VIGNIERO informed the undercover officer that he first needed to obtain narcotics from his cousin's house. Police observed VIGNIERO travelling back and forth between 3422 Irwin Avenue and 3424 Kingsbridge Avenue, which is also located near Manhattan College. As the investigation continued, officers learned that VIGNIERO's cousin, OSVALDO ESPAILLAT, resides at 3424 Kingsbridge Avenue, Apt. 15J and served as VIGNIERO's narcotics supplier.

On June 16, 2015, VIGNIERO and ESPAILLAT met with the undercover officer at the 3422 Irwin Avenue. During a conversation that was recorded by the officer, VIGNIERO and ESPAILLAT discussed how VIGNIERO sold narcotics to college students, while ESPAILLAT catered to other customers.

Subsequently, ESPAILLAT on his own sold cocaine to the undercover officer on three occasions between June 18, 2015 and July 29, 2015, at both 3424 Kingsbridge Avenue and 3422 Irwin Avenue.

Police arrested VIGNIERO and ESPAILLAT on August 13, 2015. Members of Narcotics Borough Bronx conducted court authorized searches of each defendants' respective apartments and seized approximately 215 grams (nearly a quarter of a pound) of cocaine worth up to \$17,000 on the street.

Inside VIGNIERO's apartment at 3422 Irwin Avenue, police recovered cocaine from the toilet, as well as 19 oxycodone pills and a scale from elsewhere in the apartment. At ESPAILLAT's apartment at 3424 Kingsbridge Avenue, police recovered quantities of cocaine from inside an ottoman and from the kitchen, as well as two scales and \$2,982 cash. Two young children were present inside the Kingsbridge Avenue apartment at the time of the search.

VIGNIERO faces one count of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, two counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, six counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in Third Degree, one count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, two counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Fifth Degree, one count of Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree, and two counts of Criminal Sale of Marijuana in the Fourth Degree.

ESPAILLAT faces three counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, one count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, one count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, two counts of Unlawfully Dealing with a Child in the First Degree, and one count of Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree.

Bail for VIGNIERO is set at \$50,000 cash or \$100,000 bond and bail for ESPAILLAT is set at \$300,000 cash or \$500,000 bond.

Brooklyn College investigation

JAVON HIGH, a maintenance worker at Brooklyn College, was arrested on July 23, 2015 as a result of a four-month investigation by members of the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South. HIGH is charged in connection with nine sales of cocaine to undercover officers between April 3, 2015 and July 17, 2015 in exchange for approximately \$1,400.

HIGH conducted narcotics transactions during his work shifts and, in at least one instance, he wore his work uniform. The investigation revealed that HIGH catered to customers from neighborhoods surrounding Brooklyn College.

Meetings with the undercover officer were set up by phone. Three sales occurred in front of Brooklyn College's James Hall at Brooklyn College, a building that houses multiple academic departments and the college's Early Childhood Center, which offers day care and after-school programs. Two public schools are also located in close proximity to James Hall: PS 152 School of Science & Technology and PS K315.

HIGH also made multiple sales in the vicinity of 3002 Surf Avenue in Coney Island, a building contained within the Coney Island Houses, a New York City Housing Authority residential complex.

Police arrested HIGH on the Brooklyn College campus on July 23, 2015 during a work shift. He has been employed at the school for approximately six years. An indictment charges HIGH with nine counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and three counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in or near School Grounds. He was release on \$50,000 bail.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked members of the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Bronx and Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South for their work on the investigation.

"We will continue to work with the NYPD to respond to community concerns about drug trafficking wherever they arise to ensure the safety and security of all in our great city," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan.

Police Commissioner William J. Bratton said, "There is no place in our communities for narcotics trafficking, especially on our college campuses. I would like to commend the work of the investigators of the Narcotics Borough Bronx, Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South and the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their work with these investigations."

INDICTED DEFENDANTS	CHARGES
Victor Vigniero 3422 Irwin Avenue, Basement Apt. Bronx, NY 4/26/1986	CSCS 1st – 1 ct CSCS 2nd – 2 cts CSCS 3rd – 6 cts CPCS 3rd – 1 ct CPCS 5th – 2 cts Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2nd – 1 ct Criminal Sale of Marijuana 4th – 2 cts
Oswaldo Espaillat 3424 Kingsbridge Avenue, Apt. 15J Bronx, NY 12/16/1983	CSCS 2nd – 3 cts CPCS 2nd – 1 ct CPCS 3rd – 1 ct Unlawfully Dealing with a Child 1st – 2 cts Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2nd – 1 ct
Javon High 930 Blake Avenue Brooklyn, NY 3/4/1969	CSCS 3rd – 9 cts CSCS in or near School Grounds – 3 cts

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