



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

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## Nearly 40 Pounds of Heroin and Fentanyl Seized in the Bronx: Three Indicted as Major Traffickers

*Narcotics Stamped with Numerous Brand Names, such as "COVID-19" and "Drop Dead"*

An indictment charges three individuals with Operating as a Major Trafficker following the seizure of nearly 40 pounds of alleged heroin and fentanyl from a large-scale narcotics packaging operation in the Morris Heights neighborhood of the Bronx. The organization combined heroin and fentanyl for sale in New York City and beyond, and stamped narcotics with numerous brand names, including "COVID-19". At the time of the arrests, one of the charged individuals carried a fraudulent identification card issued by the Dominican Republic National Investigations (DNI). The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF) Group T-22 conducted the investigation.

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, Ray Donovan, Special Agent in Charge of DEA New York Division, New York City Police Commissioner Dermot F. Shea and State Police Acting Superintendent Kevin P. Bruen announced the indictment and arrests today. NYDETF Group T-22 is comprised of DEA special agents, New York City Police Department (NYPD) detectives and New York State Police investigators.

The indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor charges HECTOR MORILLO, JAIME ARTILES and FREDDY HERNANDEZ-REYES with Operating as a Major Trafficker and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees. All three were arraigned today before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Abraham Clott.

The arrests occurred on June 11, 2021. On that day, members of NYDETF Group T-22 conducted a court-authorized search of two apartments at 1730 Montgomery Avenue and recovered approximately 19 kilograms of heroin and fentanyl from the apartments and a vehicle. The DEA estimates the street value of the narcotics recovered is \$5 million.

On the morning of the arrests, members of NYDETF Group T-22 were conducting surveillance near 1730 Montgomery Avenue at approximately 5:15 a.m. as part of a short-term narcotics investigation when they observed ARTILES park a Honda Pilot in front of the building. Agents and officers then saw REYES leave 1730 Montgomery Avenue carrying a weighted down black bag and walk to the Honda Pilot. REYES then reentered the building carrying a light blue colored bag. Members of NYDETF Group T-22 followed the Honda Pilot driven by ARTILES and stopped the vehicle at the I-95 lower level near the George Washington Bridge. Agents and officers saw the weighted black bag in the back seat of the car.

Later on the morning of June 11, at approximately 10:30 a.m., agents and officers saw MORILLO circle the block around 1730 Montgomery Avenue and enter the building. Agents and officers observed REYES and MORILLO exit Apt. 4G of 1730 Montgomery Avenue. Shortly thereafter, at approximately 10:50 a.m., the pair allegedly exited Apt. 6E. REYES was carrying three plastic bags, including one that appeared to contain stamps and glassine envelopes commonly used for branding and packaging individual doses of narcotics. Agents and officers stopped MORILLO and REYES. The plastic bags carried by REYES allegedly proved to contain 1.5 kilograms of heroin and fentanyl. MORILLO was allegedly in possession of an identification card issued by the Dominican Republic National Investigations (DNI). The card appears to have been obtained fraudulently.

Members of NYDETF Group T-22 obtained court-authorized Special Narcotics search warrants for both apartments and for the Honda Pilot. Inside Apt. 4G, agents and officers found approximately four kilograms of heroin and fentanyl in brick and powder form, approximately 200,000 packaged glassine envelopes of a heroin/fentanyl mixture, and packaging equipment, including dozens of stamps, grinders and scales. Stamps bore brand names such as "Drop Dead" and "COVID-19" below a picture of a skull.

The court-authorized search of Apt. 6E yielded a kilo press used for compacting powder into brick form and thousands of unused glassine envelopes. The court-authorized search of the Honda Pilot revealed the black bag contained approximately 25,000 filled glassine envelopes containing a heroin/fentanyl mixture.

The results of DEA Laboratory analysis on some of the substances seized in this case are pending.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and commended SNP's Special Investigations Bureau and members of the DEA's Drug Enforcement Task Force, Group T-22, the New York City Police Department and the New York State Police for their work on the case.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "Investigations that remove bulk shipments of deadly fentanyl-laced heroin from the drug market before they hit the streets have never been more important than now. As the CDC reported this week, fatal overdoses reached a record high nationwide in 2020. These deaths are largely due to fentanyl. We are committed to working with our partners to save lives by dismantling international trafficking networks that profit from drug dependence and death."

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark said, "Our local and federal partners continue to intercept deadly narcotics from harming our communities. This seizure of 40 pounds of heroin and fentanyl has saved lives. The fact that the packagers used "COVID-19" as a brand name illustrates the callousness of these alleged traffickers, as opioid overdose deaths surged during the pandemic. I thank the Office of Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan and the DEA for their work for the people of the Bronx."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan said, "This investigation exemplifies the dangers posed with today's street drugs, especially when it is known that fentanyl is used as the extra additive of choice. CDC data shows 61% of all drug overdoses in 2020 were attributed to synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, nationwide. Here in New York City, 75% of all drug overdoses are linked to fentanyl. Fentanyl is death. I applaud the hard work by our law enforcement partners and reiterate that we will continue to target the drug trafficking organizations that are responsible for taking too many lives, too soon."

“These seizures and charges further affirm the NYPD’s unwavering commitment to protecting New York City communities and bringing to justice those responsible narcotics trafficking. I thank and commend the investigators involved in this case and our law enforcement partners for their dedication in this case. Together, we will continue to work for and protect all New Yorkers,” said Police Commissioner Shea.

State Police Superintendent Kevin P. Bruen said, “We continue to work with our local and federal partners to target those who are trafficking dangerous narcotics in our communities. This investigation has shut down a major packaging operation and taken 40-pounds of deadly heroin and fentanyl off the streets. I want to thank the task force members and our partners for their outstanding work.”

<b>Defendants</b>	<b>Charges</b>
Hector Morillo Bronx, NY Age: 46	Operating as a Major Trafficker – 1 ct CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 3 cts
Jaime Artiles Orange, NJ Age: 47	Operating as a Major Trafficker – 1 ct CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 3 cts
Freddy Hernandez Reyes Bronx, NY Age: 44	Operating as a Major Trafficker – 1 ct CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 3 cts CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 3 cts

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