



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

For Immediate Release
July 11, 2022

snpnyc.org
@snpnyc

Contacts:

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

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

Over 150 Pounds of Crystal Methamphetamine is Seized in Manhattan: Two Men from Southern California Arrested

Some drugs concealed inside air compressor canisters

Two men from Southern California were arrested in Manhattan over the past week in connection with the transportation of large-scale shipments of crystal methamphetamine to New York. Two loads totaling approximately 75 kilograms (165 pounds), with a street value of \$1.2 million, were intercepted during a short-term investigation.

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Frank A. Tarentino III, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division, and Nassau County District Attorney Anne T. Donnelly announced the arrests. The short-term investigation was conducted by the DEA's Long Island District Office Task Force, which consists of agents and investigators from the DEA, the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the Hempstead Police Department, the New York State Police, and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office. The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Investigators Unit assisted in the investigation.

LUIS ESTRADA and CARLOS SANTOS were arrested on Tuesday, July 5, and Friday, July 8, 2022 respectively. Each man is charged in a criminal complaint filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor.

On July 5, 2022, agents and investigators were conducting surveillance outside of a hotel located at 151 Maiden Lane, near the South Street Seaport in Lower Manhattan, when they observed ESTRADA wheeling a black suitcase at approximately 9:55 a.m. Agents and officers stopped ESTRADA and found that the suitcase contained over 40 pounds of crystal methamphetamine. Also recovered were two cellphones, \$400 cash and a room key to the hotel.

Three days later, on July 8, 2022, agents and investigators were conducting surveillance near 401 West 219th Street in the Inwood neighborhood of Manhattan when they observed SANTOS in a parking lot near white van cutting open an air compressor canister using power tools. Another air compressor canister was sitting nearby.

Agents and investigators stopped SANTOS and searched both canisters, recovering more than 100 pounds of crystal methamphetamine from inside. Agents and investigators also recovered two plastic bags containing cocaine from SANTOS's person, as well as two cellphones.

The investigation revealed that SANTOS had allegedly driven a rented vehicle across the country. Both shipments are believed to have originated in Mexico.

ESTRADA is charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second and Third Degrees. SANTOS is charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second, Third and Seventh Degrees.

Methamphetamine is a stimulant that speeds up the body's system and comes as pill or powder. Crystal meth resembles glass fragments and is an altered version of the drug that is cooked with over-the-counter drugs in meth labs. Street names include: Meth, Speed, Ice, Shards, Bikers Coffee, Stove Top, Tweak, Yaba, Trash, Chalk, Crystal, Crank, or Shabu. Methamphetamine is highly addictive and can cause agitation, increased heart rate and blood pressure, increased respiration and body temperature, anxiety, and paranoia. In addition, high doses of methamphetamine can cause convulsions, cardiovascular collapse, stroke or death. More information can be found at www.dea.gov.

ESTRADA and SANTOS were arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court on Wednesday, July 6 and Saturday, July 9, 2022 respectively. Both were released on supervised release.

Under current New York State law, neither man could be charged with a bail eligible offense. Methamphetamine is categorized as a controlled substance, but not a narcotic drug. Regardless of the amount of methamphetamine involved, and regardless of a defendant's lack of connections to New York State, under current law judges may not set bail on cases involving the possession of only methamphetamine.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg, Jr., and commended her office's Special Investigations Bureau and Investigators Unit, the DEA New York Division and the DEA's Long Island District Office Task Force, including the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the Hempstead Police Department, the New York State Police, and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office. She also thanked the New York City Police Department's 46th Precinct's Anti-Crime Team for assisting in the investigation.

"The influx of crystal methamphetamine into New York City is the latest example of how synthetic drugs produced outside of the country are flooding our streets. We are all too familiar with the rising death toll and other destructive effects of these substances. Users need to be aware that dangerous synthetic drugs have thoroughly saturated the market," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan.

DEA Special Agent in Charge Tarentino said, "Methamphetamine is running rampant throughout the country causing addiction, overdoses, and poisonings. This year, DEA has seen methamphetamine seizures in New York increase 1300% since 2021 indicating New York is a bullseye for traffickers. This seizure is a calculated treachery by Mexican Cartels to flood the United States with their poison and expand their customer base while driving addiction and increasing profit margins. DEA is working hand in hand with our state and local law enforcement partners to investigate and arrest members of the most significant drug trafficking organizations and traffickers to keep our communities safe and healthy.

"Crystal methamphetamine is a dangerous drug that is growing in popularity on the East Coast," said DA Anne T. Donnelly. "With this seizure, we've removed more than 150 pounds of poison from our communities. I thank our law enforcement partners for working together to break up this drug smuggling ring."

Defendants**Charges**

Carlos Santos	CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct
San Jose, CA	CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
Age: 34	CPCS 7 th – 1 ct

Luis Estrada	CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct
San Diego, CA	CPCS 3 rd – 1 ct
Age: 19	

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