



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

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## **Accused Major Heroin Trafficker Extradited from Colombia for Prosecution in New York City**

An accused major trafficker was extradited from Colombia to face charges associated with smuggling and selling multi-kilogram quantities of heroin in New York City and for coordinating an international money-laundering scheme.

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, New York City Police Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell and New York State Police Superintendent Kevin P. Bruen announced the extradition of JUNIOR ESCOBAR MIRANDA in conjunction with the unsealing of an indictment in Manhattan Supreme Court.

ESCOBAR MIRANDA arrived in New York from Colombia on Friday, and is scheduled for arraignment today before Judge Steven M. Statsinger. An indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor contains charges of Conspiracy in the Second Degree, Operating as a Major Trafficker, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, and Money Laundering in the Second Degree.

The investigation was conducted by DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (DETF), Group T-41, which consists of agents with DEA New York Division, New York City Police Department (NYPD) detectives and New York State Police investigators. Assisting in the investigation were the DEA Bogota Country Office, the National Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Colombia, and the Colombian National Police, Heroin Trafficking Unit.

The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Colombia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, the Consulate General of Colombia in New York City, and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of International Affairs (OIA), assisted with the extradition and other matters related to the prosecution.

The investigation revealed that ESCOBAR MIRANDA, who was based in Cali, Colombia throughout the conspiracy, maintained direct oversight of nearly all aspects of his lucrative drug trafficking business. Specifically, the indictment alleges that from May to October, 2017, ESCOBAR MIRANDA conspired to

possess and sell approximately 10 kilograms of heroin in New York City. The investigation revealed ESCOBAR MIRANDA used human couriers, known as “drug mules,” to bring the heroin into the U.S. concealed inside suitcases. Once the narcotics successfully arrived in the U.S., ESCOBAR MIRANDA allegedly coordinated the delivery of the heroin to New York City-based associates who would then sell the heroin to customers on ESCOBAR MIRANDA’s behalf.

Narcotics-related communications between ESCOBAR MIRANDA and his associates were intercepted by Colombian authorities and shared with the DEA. ESCOBAR MIRANDA allegedly sent instructions related to narcotics transactions and money laundering via text message through Blackberry Messenger. Those communications revealed that ESCOBAR MIRANDA also instructed his New York City-based associates regarding the price at which kilograms were to be sold and coordinated the collection of the proceeds from those transactions. He then worked with a Chinese national to launder the bulk of those proceeds while also transferring a portion of the cash to multiple bank accounts in Colombia. This hands-on approach, in which he controlled almost all aspects of the smuggling, selling and laundering of sizeable drugs proceeds, ultimately led to his downfall.

As detailed in the indictment, conversations between ESCOBAR MIRANDA and his associates referenced at least two shipments of a total of approximately 10 kilograms of heroin to New York City between May and October of 2017. Two of those kilograms were seized by law enforcement in Queens in October 2017 and over \$100,000 in cash related to a previous sale were recovered in August 2017, also in Queens. In all, the estimated value of the narcotics that ESCOBAR-MIRANDA smuggled into New York City during a six-month period was greater than \$500,000.

In a communication that illustrates his close control of his narcotics business, ESCOBAR MIRANDA allegedly provided detailed instructions related to the receipt of a suitcase containing narcotics in a text message on August 5, 2017. “He’s going to pick up the suitcase. You are going to be with him at all times until he pays for everything...they want to take it and test it all out,” ESCOBAR MIRANDA allegedly said.

ESCOBAR MIRANDA subsequently provided directions to an individual in Queens, N.Y. related to the transfer of narcotics proceeds to multiple accounts in Colombia. On August 9, 2017 he allegedly wrote, “And please send those via regular money order, please don’t send them through the bank.”

In the last charged shipment in October of 2017, ESCOBAR MIRANDA allegedly coordinated the delivery of eight kilograms of heroin to an individual in New York City, writing, “It’s all there. There are 8 in total.”

ESCOBAR’s illegal activities coincided with a surge in the heroin supply in New York City and a sharp escalation in overdose deaths. In contrast to other narcotics suppliers based in Colombia and elsewhere, who partner with Mexican cartels and other intermediaries to smuggle drugs in the United States, ESCOBAR MIRANDA personally managed his business from beginning to end. This approach afforded him greater control over profits while reducing his dependency on other criminal organizations.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan commended her office’s Special Investigations Bureau, the DEA New York Division, the New York City Police Department, and the New York State Police for their work on the case, and thanked the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, and the Consulate General of Colombia in New York City

“Escobar Miranda controlled an international drug trafficking network that generated large profits from the sale of heroin in New York. At the same time, New Yorkers were suffering unprecedented numbers of overdose deaths. Escobar Miranda’s extradition to New York City represents law enforcement’s commitment to holding drug traffickers accountable for actions that claim precious lives, even those who believe they are safely beyond our reach,” said Special Prosecutor Brennan.

“This major trafficker oversaw every aspect of his drug trafficking operation to include shipping and delivery, distribution, and money laundering,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Tarentino. “DEA focuses our resources on major traffickers like Escobar Miranda, whose criminal network operated from

Colombia, all the way to the streets of New York City. I commend the tenacity and great work of all the law enforcement agencies involved in this operation.”

“Today’s indictment is another step forward in our unrelenting efforts to rid our city of illegal drugs,” said NYPD Commissioner Sewell. “No matter where or how this poison is peddled, we are united with our local, state, federal, and international law-enforcement partners in the fight against drug traffickers and the havoc they wreak in our communities. To that end, I thank and commend the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York, the DEA’s New York Division, the New York State Police, and everyone else involved in this case for their exceptional work.”

New York State Police Superintendent Bruen said, “I am proud of the dedicated efforts of our members and law enforcement partners in this investigation which has resulted in the indictment of Escobar Miranda. Drug trafficking has long been a catalyst for violence and other criminal activities that plague our communities. This indictment should serve as a reminder that the infiltration of dangerous drugs into the country and New York State will not be tolerated.”

| <b>Defendant</b>                                    | <b>Charges</b>  |
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| Junior Escobar Miranda<br>Cali, Colombia<br>Age: 48 | Conspiracy 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 ct<br>Operating as a Major Trafficker – 2 cts<br>CSCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 cts<br>CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 2 cts<br>Money Laundering 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 ct |

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