



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

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Accused Major Trafficker Indicted in Kidnappings and Assaults Linked to an Alleged Drug-Related Dispute

Facing Prosecution in New York City After Year and a Half Spent as a Fugitive in Mexico

An indictment filed in Manhattan Supreme Court charges Jonathan HUERTAS, aka "El Don," with Operating as a Major Trafficker and with orchestrating two kidnappings and assaults that allegedly occurred in the Morris Park neighborhood of the Bronx in early 2022. The indictment also alleges plans for a third kidnapping. HUERTAS fled New York following the arrests of three of his co-conspirators. He was arrested on a federal warrant in Jalisco, Mexico in September of 2023, and deported after more than a year and a half as a fugitive. An investigation revealed that the kidnappings and assaults stemmed from the theft of narcotics.

HUERTAS is scheduled to be arraigned this morning before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Steven Statsinger in Part 22. The indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor contains charges of Conspiracy in the Second Degree, Operating as a Major Trafficker, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees, Kidnapping in the Second Degree, Assault in the Second Degree and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree.

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 (NY), and New York City Police Commissioner Edward A. Caban announced the 12-count indictment today in conjunction with the arraignment.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "The illegal drugs flooding our city are not only causing record overdose deaths, but members of criminal organizations involved in the importation and distribution have been charged with crimes of cruelty and disregard for human life. Today's announcement demonstrates the commitment of federal, state and local law enforcement to assuring that those responsible are held accountable."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank Tarentino said, "This indictment demonstrates the dark side of drug trafficking; threats of violence, kidnapping, and torture. DEA is committed to bringing criminals to justice, no matter where they might flee. In this case, the global reach of DEA and our law-enforcement

partners tracked Jonathan Huertas to Jalisco, MX in order for him to face the consequences of his crimes.”

NYPD Commissioner Edward A. Caban said, “New York City law enforcement clearly has a long reach, and anyone who involves themselves in drug trafficking and its associated violence here will assuredly be identified, investigated, and arrested – wherever they try to hide. This indictment reflects criminality that will never be tolerated in our city, and the NYPD and our dedicated state and federal partners vow to continue battling this persistent threat.”

The investigation was conducted by DEA NY Division, the New York City Police Department (NYPD), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) New York Field Operations, and the New York State Police. The U.S. Marshal’s Service and Mexican authorities also provided assistance.

As detailed in the indictment, in late January and early February of 2022, HUERTAS allegedly participated in the kidnapping and assault of two individuals and planned the kidnapping of another. Following the arrests of three alleged co-conspirators in February of 2022, HUERTAS fled New York to Mexico, where he was apprehended more than a year and a half later.

Portions of the kidnappings were captured in audio and video recordings recovered from cellphones and iCloud accounts. A surveillance system at the basement apartment where the crimes are alleged to have occurred also captured the defendant, his co-conspirators, and two victims entering and exiting.

On February 1, 2022, at approximately 11 a.m., law enforcement officers observed co-conspirator Ronny JIMENEZ enter and exit a basement apartment located at 1853 Bronxdale Avenue in the Bronx. Ronny JIMENEZ then drove away from the location in a pickup truck. Soon afterwards, law enforcement allegedly recovered a loaded handgun from the vehicle. Co-conspirator Cesar JIMENEZ was also inside the truck at the time. Both men were arrested.

A subsequent court-authorized search of the basement apartment at 1853 Bronxdale Avenue resulted in the seizure of over four kilograms (nine pounds) of fentanyl, cocaine, heroin, and para-fluorofentanyl, drug paraphernalia, and an additional loaded handgun. Law enforcement also recovered plastic twists, duct tape, an iron and other materials indicating that a potential kidnapping may have occurred inside of that apartment.

A third co-conspirator, Jasmin ROMAN, was the resident of record at 1853 Bronxdale Avenue and was captured on video surveillance regularly entering and exiting 1853 Bronxdale Avenue during the conspiracy. Law enforcement also arrested ROMAN in Yonkers, New York on February 3, 2022. A search warrant on a video surveillance system at 1853 Bronxdale Avenue allegedly revealed that HUERTAS and others regularly accessed the basement apartment, including on January 29, 2022.

A court-authorized search of an iCloud account allegedly uncovered a video recording of HUERTAS repeatedly threatening a male victim (MALE-1) and placing a heated iron on his exposed buttocks while the victim was physically bound and held against his will inside of 1853 Bronxdale Avenue on January 29, 2022. Another video from that day allegedly revealed that HUERTAS and Cesar JIMENEZ melted a plastic bottle above the exposed buttock of MALE-1, causing the melted plastic to drip on the victim’s skin.

Additional surveillance images from 1853 Bronxdale Avenue revealed that, approximately two days later, in the early morning hours of January 31, 2022, co-conspirators Ronny JIMENEZ and Cesar JIMENEZ transported a second male (MALE-2) into the basement apartment. A subsequent video recording recovered pursuant to a cellphone search warrant captured Cesar JIMENEZ also placing a heated iron on the exposed buttock of MALE-2.

The investigation revealed that prior to the above-described events, Cesar JIMENEZ was in text communication with HUERTAS, including from outside a residence where MALE-2 was allegedly

abducted. Video of MALE-2 being restrained and assaulted was subsequently forwarded to a Signal account allegedly associated with HUERTAS.

Another video recorded earlier on January 29, 2022 revealed discussions about plans for a third kidnapping.

A little over two weeks later, on February 17, 2022, officers in the Bronx recovered a Toyota Highlander that was reported stolen in the vicinity of 1853 Bronxdale Avenue on January 29, 2022. A subsequent search of the vehicle yielded approximately one kilogram of cocaine. Video surveillance revealed that Ronny JIMENEZ and MALE-1 had been inside of the Toyota Highlander prior to it being stolen on January 29, 2022.

Video recordings and text communications allegedly indicate that HUERTAS worked with others to kidnap and assault the two males previously mentioned and planned the third kidnapping in an effort to recover narcotics stolen from the Toyota Highlander on January 29, 2022.

After Ronny JIMENEZ, Cesar JIMENEZ, and Jasmin ROMAN were arrested in early February 2022, HUERTAS fled from New York. At the time of his arrest in Jalisco, Mexico in September of 2023, HUERTAS was in possession of a fraudulent Mexican identification card in addition to his New York State identification.

HUERTAS allegedly committed the crimes detailed in the indictment, and fled the country, while he was on supervisory release on a federal oxycodone conspiracy conviction from 2014. A federal warrant for failure to comply with provisions of his supervised release was the basis for his arrest in Mexico. HUERTAS was deported from Mexico and returned to federal custody in the Southern District of New York. He will now be arraigned in New York State Supreme Court in New York City to face the state charges announced today.

Ronny JIMENEZ and Cesar JIMENEZ both pleaded guilty to Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, Kidnapping in the Second Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree. They each received sentences of seven years in prison plus five years post release supervision, five years in prison plus five years post release supervision, and three years in prison plus three years post release supervision respectively, with all sentences running concurrently. Jasmin ROMAN pleaded guilty to Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Fifth Degree and was sentenced to five years of probation.

Special Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and commended SNP's Special Investigations Bureau, DEA NY Division, the NYPD, CBP New York Field Operations and the New York State Police for their work on the investigation. Assisting in the investigation were DEA, DEA Miami Division, HSI New York, HSI Miami, New York/New Jersey Port Authority Police Department, the Rockland County District Attorney's Office, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the Yonkers Police Department and the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), the U.S. Marshal's service and Mexican authorities.

Defendant	Charges
Jonathan Huertas, aka "El Don"	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct
Age: 31	Operating as a Major Trafficker – 1 ct
Hudson County Department of Corrections	CPCS 1 st – 2 cts
And Rehabilitation	CPCS 3 rd – 2 cts
Kearny, NJ	Kidnapping 2 nd – 2 cts
	Assault 2 nd – 3 cts
	Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 nd – 1 ct

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