



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

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## Over 26 Pounds of Cocaine and \$3 Million Cash Recovered in Bronx Apartment

### *Drugs and Money Concealed in Furniture Outfitted with Secret Trap Compartments*

An investigation into a major narcotics distributor resulted in the seizure of approximately 12 kilograms (more than 26 pounds) of cocaine and over \$3 million cash from an apartment in the Norwood neighborhood of the Bronx. The narcotics and money were concealed inside several pieces of furniture outfitted with hidden trap compartments. One individual was arrested.

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, Frank A. Tarentino III, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division (NY), New York State Police Acting Superintendent Steven G. James, and New York City Police Commissioner Edward A. Caban announced the arrest and seizure following an arraignment in Manhattan Criminal Court.

A criminal complaint filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) charges Juan RONDON with Operating as a Major Trafficker and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees. At an arraignment last night, a Manhattan Criminal Court judge ordered RONDON held without bail. As stated in court, RONDON was previously deported in 2006.

**Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan** said, "This investigation shows how lucrative the cocaine trafficking business can be. Over a span of years, an accused major trafficker apparently squirreled away more than \$3 million, filling secret compartments inside furniture to the brim with bundles of cash wrapped together in rubber bands, expensive watches, and kilograms of cocaine. An absence of special security equipment or fortified locks on the nondescript apartment suggests misguided confidence. Investigative savvy and perseverance, with some canine assistance, netted the narcotics proceeds and prevented millions of dollars' worth of cocaine from hitting the streets of New York City and surrounding areas."

**Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark** said, "The arrest of a major regional drug distributor based in the Bronx turned up more than \$3 million cash, a wealth of luxury watches, and more than 26 pounds of cocaine in a Norwood apartment. This shows how prevalent and lucrative the drug trade remains. I thank Special Narcotics Bridget Brennan and her team for their work on this case as well as our federal

and state partners for their continued vigilance and focus on ridding the Bronx community of major drug traffickers.”

**DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank Tarentino** said, “A multi-million-dollar drug den looked like any ordinary apartment until our agents and investigators uncovered hidden compartments in various pieces of furniture filled with contraband. Over 12 kilos of cocaine and over three million dollars of drug proceeds were seized as part of this ongoing investigation. I applaud the diligent work of the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force and Special Narcotics Prosecutor by removing this cocaine from the distribution pipeline throughout the Northeast.”

**New York State Police Acting Superintendent Steven G. James** said, “A cumulative effort among law enforcement partners has once again resulted in a massive seizure of deadly drugs. Not only did this interception save lives, but it also put an end to the violence that is often associated with drug trafficking. The New York State Police will continue to work vigilantly alongside our partners to put dangerous individuals like Mr. Rondon behind bars.”

**NYPD Commissioner Edward A. Caban** said, “These charges reflect New York City’s latest multiagency effort to hold accountable those allegedly responsible for flooding our neighborhoods with illicit drugs. NYPD investigators greatly value our partnership with the city’s Special Narcotics Prosecutor, the New York State Police, and the DEA, and I commend every member of the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force for their ongoing commitment to our shared mission of keeping New Yorkers in every community safe.”

RONDON was arrested on Wednesday, March 20, 2024, at approximately 4:40 p.m., following a two-month investigation by the SNP Investigators Unit, the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, Group T-23, and the New York State Police Troop K, Violent Gangs and Narcotics Enforcement Team (VGNET). NYDETF Group T-23 is comprised of agents and officers from DEA New York Division, the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the New York State Police.

On the day of the arrest, investigators and agents were conducting surveillance outside 3405 Gates Place when they allegedly observed RONDON enter the building carrying a bag and then exit with the same bag a short time later. RONDON subsequently returned to the building empty handed.

At approximately 4:40 p.m., investigators and agents observed RONDON leave 3405 Gates Place, Apt. 2A for a second time and stopped him in the lobby. He was allegedly in possession of a quantity of cocaine and the keys to Apartment 2A.

Investigators and agents conducted a court-authorized search of 3405 Gates Place, Apt. 2A with assistance from a New York State Police K9 Unit and discovered several pieces of furniture were outfitted with secret trap compartments. Dressers, nightstands, and a coffee table contained large hidden compartments stuffed with bags of cash. Money was wrapped in bundles and labeled with dates spanning the past several years.

The coffee table allegedly contained approximately 12 kilograms of cocaine and some of the cash. At least 10 luxury watches, including those made by Rolex and Cartier, were recovered from a hidden trap in a nightstand. Despite the large amounts of money, narcotics, and jewelry present, the apartment appeared to lack security equipment or fortifications.

The results of DEA laboratory analysis on the seized narcotics are pending.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan thanked Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and commended SNP’s Investigators Unit, Trial Division, and Heroin Interdiction Team, DEA New York Division, the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, Group T-23, the New York State Police Troop K, VGNET, and the New York City Police Department and partner prosecution office’s for their work on the investigation.

<b>Defendant</b>	<b>Charges</b>
Juan Rondon Bronx, NY Age: 60	Operating as a Major Trafficker – 1 ct CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 3 cts

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