



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**NEW YORK LONGSHOREMAN SENTENCED TO 160 MONTHS
IN PRISON FOR NARCOTICS SMUGGLING**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JOSE POLO, a former longshoreman at the New York Container Terminal ("NYCT") in Staten Island, New York, was sentenced today to 160 months in prison for his role in smuggling cocaine through the NYCT. POLO's sentence was imposed by United States District Judge NAOMI REICE BUCHWALD in Manhattan federal court.

According to the Superseding Indictment to which POLO pleaded guilty, statements made at his plea and sentencing, and other documents publicly filed in this case and related cases:

The New York Container Terminal on Staten Island, New York, is one of the major seaports in New York Harbor. In 2006, agents from the United States Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") and the Drug Enforcement Administration's ("DEA") Westchester Regional Office began investigating an Ecuador-based drug-trafficking network that transported kilogram quantities of cocaine hidden in containers of merchandise shipped from Guayaquil, Ecuador, to New York.

POLO worked as a mechanic at NYCT from 1979 until his arrest in this case in July 2007. POLO's position as a mechanic allowed him access to the shipping containers before they were inspected by U.S. Customs officials. From 2004 to 2007, POLO used information provided by the cocaine suppliers to locate the containers in which cocaine was hidden. He then broke into the containers and, with the assistance of others whom he recruited, removed the cocaine. POLO then transported the cocaine to a liquor store in Brooklyn he owned, occasionally storing kilogram quantities of cocaine there in a secret compartment in the floor of the store's basement. POLO then distributed the cocaine to various wholesale dealers, who, in turn, sold the cocaine to numerous street-level cocaine dealers in Manhattan and the Bronx.

It is estimated that, during the three years prior to his arrest, POLO unloaded and distributed more than 500 kilograms of cocaine in this manner, which had a street value of over \$20 million. POLO also attempted to coordinate the delivery of two additional shipments, totaling 215 kilograms of cocaine, in 2007, but officers with Customs and Border Protection seized the cocaine before it reached NYCT. POLO earned approximately \$1 million for his role in the scheme, which Judge BUCHWALD ordered him to forfeit to the United States, along with his liquor store in Brooklyn.

POLO, 55, of Brooklyn, New York, pleaded guilty on November 13, 2008, to one count of conspiracy to distribute narcotics. In addition to the terms of imprisonment, Judge BUCHWALD also sentenced POLO to 5 years' supervised release.

Mr. DASSIN praised the investigative work of ICE and the DEA.

Assistant United States Attorneys BRENDAN R. MCGUIRE, ARIANNA BERG and NOLA HELLER are in charge of the prosecution.

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