



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**FORMER NEW YORK CITY POLICE OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO
CONSPIRING TO COMMIT DRUG, EXTORTION,
AND FIREARMS OFFENSES**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced today that JUAN ACOSTA, a former police officer with the New York City Police Department ("NYPD"), has pleaded guilty before United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN for his role in a conspiracy involving cocaine distribution and extortion, and for unlawfully possessing a firearm in furtherance of those crimes.

According to the Indictment and other documents filed in Manhattan federal court:

From March 2000 until his arrest on December 4, 2009, ACOSTA was employed as an NYPD police officer and was most recently assigned to patrol duty in the 43rd Precinct in Bronx, New York. From 2005 through November 2009, ACOSTA conspired with co-defendant YORICK RAFAEL CORNIEL-PEREZ, a/k/a "Rafi," to distribute multiple kilograms of cocaine in and around New York City. In addition, ACOSTA abused his authority as a police officer to facilitate his and CORNIEL-PEREZ's illegal cocaine trafficking activities. In mid-2005, for example, ACOSTA used an NYPD car to rob a drug courier of several hundred thousand dollars in cash derived from a drug deal with CORNIEL-PEREZ, making it appear as if the money had been seized by law enforcement when, in truth and in fact, ACOSTA and CORNIEL-PEREZ had taken the cash.

In October of 2009, ACOSTA and CORNIEL-PEREZ met on several occasions with a person whom they believed to be a high-level narcotics trafficker from Colombia, but who was in fact a cooperating witness with the Government. ACOSTA and CORNIEL-PEREZ agreed to provide protection for a 10-kilogram shipment of cocaine which was to be transported from Long Island to the Bronx. ACOSTA boasted of his status as a police officer and how it would help facilitate the transaction, and also identified the

location of police precincts and the local routes that would be less likely patrolled by the police during the transportation of the narcotics to the Bronx. Ultimately, on November 12, 2009, ACOSTA personally transported what he believed to be the 10-kilogram cocaine shipment from Long Island to the Bronx.

ACOSTA, 34, of Bronx, New York, faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison on the narcotics charge, as well as a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison on the extortion charge, and a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 5 years in prison for carrying a firearm in furtherance of the narcotics and extortion offenses. ACOSTA is scheduled to be sentenced on July 22, 2010, by Judge SCHEINDLIN.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau.

This case is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit and Violent Crimes Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys RUA KELLY, MARISSA MOLÉ, and PAUL KRIEGER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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