



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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

**DEA
ERIN McKENZIE-MULVEY
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 337-2906**

**ICE
HAROLD ORT
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(973) 776-3251**

**NYPD
PAUL BROWNE
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(646) 610-6700**

**TWELVE CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY FOR
RUNNING BRONX HEROIN MILL**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), PETER J. SMITH, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and RAYMOND W. KELLY, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD"), announced the filing of charges against 12 individuals, stemming from arrests and seizures made yesterday evening at a heroin mill in the Bronx, New York. According to the Complaint filed in Manhattan federal court:

Since October 2007, law enforcement agents have been investigating a narcotics trafficking organization which distributes heroin throughout the greater New York and New Jersey area. As part of the investigation, law enforcement authorities intercepted telephone conversations during which members of the drug organization discussed the day-to-day heroin sales and business of the organization. During one recorded conversation between one of the leaders of the drug organization and a co-

conspirator, the co-conspirator said, "With one million pesos of merchandise, that business 3 to 4 months is selling 25 daily" -- meaning that \$1 million worth of product would generate approximately \$25,000 in daily sales for a period of three to four months.

Law enforcement agents also learned that an apartment located on Story Avenue, Bronx, New York, was a location used to store, process, and package heroin. Yesterday afternoon, during the execution of a court-authorized search warrant of the apartment, a number of individuals attempted to flee from the apartment where heroin was being prepared for sale by jumping from the balcony of the 9th floor apartment to various balconies below. One individual died in the course of attempting to flee from authorities. Two others -- EURIDYCE CORTUNCAL and CARMEN ACOSTA -- were injured while fleeing and are hospitalized. The remaining defendants were arrested in and near the apartment building and elsewhere.

Also during the execution of the search warrant, law enforcement agents seized several kilograms of heroin and various paraphernalia used to cut and package heroin, including digital scales, grinders, strainers, glassine envelopes and ink pads.

Twelve members of the organization were charged with a federal narcotics trafficking conspiracy in a Complaint filed today. The defendants other than CORTUNCAL and ACOSTA are being presented in Manhattan federal court this afternoon. They are: HECTOR V. PAULINO, JOSE TAVERAS, a/k/a "Hochy," LAUREANO ROJAS, RAULLIN PADILLA-FERNANDEZ, a/k/a "Salvatore Gomez," ROLANDO CRUZ, LETECIA GARCIA, JOSE ALBERTO CABRERA, JOSE MIRANDA, EDWIN FELIZ, and RONALD CORTORREAL.

If convicted, the defendants each face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the DEA, ICE, and NYPD.

Assistant United States Attorneys KENNETH A. POLITE and MICHAEL D. MAIMIN are in charge of the prosecution.

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