



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES THREE MEN WITH  
MASSIVE HEROIN DISTRIBUTION**

*DEA Seizes 75 Kilograms of Heroin, The Fourth Largest Ever in the  
United States*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and GERARD P. McALEER, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's New Jersey Division ("DEA") announced today a Superseding Indictment charging three members of an alleged narcotics conspiracy involved in the distribution of approximately 75 kilograms of heroin, as well as approximately 84 kilograms of cocaine.

According to documents filed in this case, including the Superseding Indictment unsealed in Manhattan federal court:

From October 2008 until July 14, 2009, RAFAEL VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA, a/k/a "Raffa," ALBERTO NIETO, JR., and RAFAEL VARGAS-AGUILAR, worked together to distribute heroin and cocaine in New York and in New Jersey. On March 3, 2009, VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA traveled from New Jersey to Dyckman Street in New York, New York, where he obtained a car with a hidden compartment capable of storing narcotics. On July 14, 2009, VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA bought a minivan and several duffel bags and took them to a warehouse in New Jersey, after which he met up with NIETO and VARGAS-AGUILAR, who were in a recreational vehicle, at the Ramapo service area on Interstate 87 in New York.

That same day, VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA and VARGAS-AGUILAR transported approximately 75 kilograms of heroin and 84 kilograms of cocaine, hidden in the recreational vehicle, to the warehouse in New Jersey. Law enforcement agents entered the warehouse on July 14, 2009, where they arrested NIETO and found the duffel

bags and the secret compartments in the recreational vehicle containing drugs. VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA was arrested leaving the warehouse; VARGAS-AGUILAR was apprehended later the same day at a motel in New Jersey. The seizure announced today was the fourth largest seizure of heroin in United States history.

VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA, 29, resides in Paterson, New Jersey.

NIETO, 21, resides in Highland, California.

VARGAS-AGUILAR, 56, resides in Tarzana, California.

The defendants have been in custody since their arrests. VILLAGRANA-ARREOLA and NIETO were arraigned today on the Superseding Indictment in Manhattan federal court by United States Magistrate Judge DEBRA FREEMAN.

If convicted, the defendants each face a maximum sentence of life in prison, and a maximum fine of \$4,000,000, or twice the gross gain or loss to others from the offense.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding work of the United States DEA for its work in this investigation and thanked the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office for its assistance.

Assistant United States Attorneys NICOLE FREIDLANDER and GLEN KOPP 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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