

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **BUFFALO MAN ARRESTED; CHARGED WITH DRUG, WEAPONS CHARGES**

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Juan Lopez, AKA "Paradise," 29, of Buffalo, N.Y., was arrested and charged by Criminal Complaint with possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking activities, conspiracy to distribute cocaine, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. The charges carry a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Melissa Marangola, who is handling the case, stated that in 2008 and 2009, the defendant began utilizing Pennsylvania residents as "straw purchasers" to buy several firearms for him. In exchange, the "straw purchasers" received money and cocaine. The firearms were then brought to Buffalo to be used in drug trafficking activities. At the time, Lopez was a convicted felon and was unable to legally purchase firearms in New York State.

The defendant made an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder, Jr. this morning. He is currently in state custody serving a prison term on unrelated charges.

The arrest is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Frank Christiano.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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