



*United States Attorney
District of New Jersey*

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**RESIDENT OF PUERTO RICO CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO POSSESS
WITH INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE MORE THAN 10 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE**

NEWARK, N.J. – A resident of Puerto Rico was charged today with attempting to smuggle more than 10 kilograms of cocaine into the United States through Newark Liberty International Airport, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced.

Raynee Emrico Gilbert Contreras Crespo, 21, is charged by complaint with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine. He had his initial appearance on the charges today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Steven C. Mannion in Newark federal court and was detained.

According to documents filed in this case:

On Sept. 13, 2018, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) was conducting an operation at Newark Liberty International Airport in which they were observing passengers and bags that could potentially be transporting narcotics. Agents identified two bags that potentially contained narcotics that were checked on a flight from Puerto Rico, observing that the bags were heavily weighted for their size. DEA agents in Newark established surveillance at the assigned luggage carousel for the flight and saw Crespo retrieve the bags and leave the airport.

The agents approached Crespo and asked him if his bags contained narcotics. After initially denying that the bags contained narcotics, Crespo subsequently admitted that they did, and signed a written consent to allow the agents to search the bags. Approximately 12 kilograms of a mixture and substance that field-tested positive for cocaine was found.

The drug conspiracy charge carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison, a maximum potential penalty of life, and a \$10 million fine.

U.S. Attorney Carpenito credited the special agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Valerie A. Nickerson, with the arrest.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Ferketic of the U.S. Attorney's Office Public Protection Unit in Newark.

The charge and allegations in the complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Defense counsel: John Yauch Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender, Newark