



Department of Justice

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United States Attorney Zachary A. Cunha Press Conference U.S. Attorney's Office – Monday, September 19, 2022

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good morning- I'm United States Attorney Zachary Cunha, and I'd like to thank you all for joining us here today as we announce charges resulting from the seizure of approximately 660,500 counterfeit Adderall® pills, all containing methamphetamine. By weight, those pills clocked in at approximately 660 pounds.

That's roughly the weight of a V8 car engine or a baby grand piano.

We believe this to be the single largest seizure of fake Adderall pills in the United States, as well as among the largest seizures of methamphetamine in DEA New England Field Division history, and in that regard, I'd like to welcome my colleague, Brian Boyle, Special Agent in Charge from the Drug Enforcement Administration's New England Field Division, who you will hear from shortly. This seizure, and its related, and still ongoing, investigation, has led to charges and a plea agreement that were filed this morning in federal district court here in Providence.

Every day, this Office works closely with our law enforcement partners- federal, state, and local, to target the drivers of violent crime and overdose deaths in our communities- focusing in no small part on the impact of significant narcotics trafficking and manufacturing, striving to bring targeted cases that have the greatest possible impact on community safety. The information and plea agreement filed this morning in federal district court are a direct result of those efforts.

That criminal information charges RI resident **DYLAN RODAS**, age 27 with possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine.

This charge is subject to a mandatory minimum penalty of ten years imprisonment, and, if accepted by the court, we have reached a plea agreement which provides that that Mr. Rodas will serve at least those ten years in federal prison.

As I mentioned, Mr. Rodas' arrest stems from an ongoing and extensive investigation by the DEA and its task force partners in state and local law enforcement. In the course of that investigation, earlier this year, DEA agents executed court-authorized federal search warrants at two locations in Cumberland.

During those searches, DEA recovered and seized as alleged in the information and as seen here: The 660,500 fake Adderall® pills I referenced, as well as:

- a bucket containing an additional 40 pounds of methamphetamine mixture that was prepped and ready to be pressed into pill form by two motorized pill presses that agents also seized;

Together with those items, the DEA found, approximately:

- Fifteen hundred pills containing fentanyl;
- 11 kilograms of methamphetamine powder;
- 250 grams of crack cocaine;
- \$15,000 in cash;
- and seven handguns, among them
 - two so-called “ghost guns”
 - and two guns with obliterated serial numbers.

All of those guns will be forfeited and destroyed in connection with this prosecution.

The quantity of methamphetamine represented by this seizure – methamphetamine that was packaged, prepped, and ready to flow out onto the street, to devastating effect in our communities – is staggering.

I commend the DEA and our task force partners for the exceptional investigative work that led to this arrest and the filing of criminal charges.

But the most important observations that I would leave you with are not about an individual prosecution or a seizure, however large, they are the following:

First, it is no secret that Rhode Island, and New England at large, is suffering from an epidemic of opioid abuse and opioid deaths that continues to run into record numbers- after a brief decline, those numbers are rising again – to 435 deaths in Rhode Island during 2021 alone.

The fact of the matter is that over 100,000 Americans lost their lives to drug overdoses in the past year (that's a rate of 75 people each day)

- 64% of those deaths were from opioids
- 28% from psychostimulants – predominantly meth

The overdose epidemic has- and does – to this day - wreak devastation on all of our communities, across every demographic. There is no neighborhood, no level of income, no professional or educational background that this does not touch.

So, I want to make clear that combatting large-scale opioid trafficking, including the increasing and increasingly deadly prevalence of fentanyl has been, and will remain, a top priority of this office.

But for a long time, we here in New England have been spared the full impact of methamphetamine, a drug that has blighted lives in so many other communities across the country.

Those days, I regret to say, are over, with meth increasingly making its presence felt in Rhode Island and across New England as a whole.

The prosecution we announce today, which involves the seizure of what I can only term industrial-scale quantities of meth, is a stark reminder that we cannot be complacent- we cannot treat meth as a problem that happens elsewhere.

And so second, I want to re-emphasize that this office, and its law enforcement partners will not be complacent. We will use every resource at our disposal to continue to bring targeted, high-impact prosecutions that disrupt this kind of large-scale drug trafficking and the devastation and violence it brings to our communities.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, I want to say a word about the nature of what we found here and what we are seeing more generally in any number of cases.

Pills that contain these drugs -- whether its methamphetamine, or fentanyl – don’t come stamped with the label “fentanyl” or “meth”.

They are – here, and in almost every case we see- deliberately made to look like something else- whether its Adderall®, or Percocet®, or some other drug that the buyer may think is safe and what it appears to be.

If you, or a loved one, are buying or taking pills off the street, or from a friend, or from anywhere that is not a pharmacy or a physician, the odds are that it’s not what you think.

And if whatever you get is laced with fentanyl, that pill may be the last thing you take- that’s not hyperbole- it’s a grim truth.

We will continue to do our part to combat the trafficking of these drugs, but there is no prosecution, no conviction, no sentence that will bring back a friend, a loved one, or a family member who is the victim of an overdose. I implore you- be aware, be vigilant, spread the word and protect yourself and your loved ones.

With that, I’ll turn this over to the Special Agent in Charge for a few additional remarks, and then we’ll take your questions.

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