

**Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor
for the City of New York**

Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

80 Centre Street, Sixth Floor
New York, NY 10013
212-815-0400, Gen
212-815-0440, Fax

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Contacts:

Catherine Christian
Special Narcotics Prosecutor's Office
212-815-0178

Paul J. Browne
New York City Police Department
646-610-6700

Erin Mulvey
Drug Enforcement Administration
New York Field Division
212-337-2906

Lt. Glenn Miner
Public Information Office
New York State Police
518-457-2180

Fifty-One Pounds of “Crystal Meth” and Eleven Pounds of Heroin Seized from NYC Distributor: Shipped from Mexico

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY and New York State Police Superintendent JOSEPH A. D'AMICO announced today that a grand jury has voted the indictment of a New York City-based drug kingpin JOSE MAURO MOTA and three fellow drug traffickers following the record-breaking seizure of 51 pounds of methamphetamine and 11 pounds of heroin worth approximately \$6.5 million.

This is the region's largest seizure of the methamphetamine, “crystal meth,” in recent years. The shipment would have sold for approximately \$4.8 million and was five times the size of the total amount of methamphetamine seized by the DEA's New York Field Division in all of 2010. Meanwhile, the heroin in this case was extraordinarily pure and carried an estimated street-value of an additional \$1.75 million. Purity levels for both drugs tested at over 90 percent.

DEA Special Agents seized the massive load at the Vince Lombardi Service Area off Interstate 95 (I-95) last month following a two-week wiretap investigation by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, Group T-33, which is composed of DEA agents, members of the NYPD and New York State Police investigators.

Originating in Mexico, the drug shipment was first transported to Texas, where it remained for several weeks, and then trucked across the country. MOTA was arrested on July 3, along with DEIVIS RAFAEL CEBALLOS, CESAR PRIMITIVO LARA and ROMEDI LARA-SERRANO, as the drugs were being transferred from a tractor trailer to a car at the I-95 service area in Ridgefield, N.J.

At the outset of the investigation, agents developed intelligence identifying MOTA as a New York City-based drug trafficker who acted as a major distributor for the eastern seaboard. By listening to his phone conversations, which were recorded pursuant to a court-authorized wiretap, agents learned that MOTA was waiting for a large shipment of drugs in mid-June.

The load had already crossed the border from Mexico into Texas at the time the investigation began. CEBALLOS, a resident of Spring, Tex., was in charge making the transportation arrangements. An employee of an Iowa-based trucking company, CEBALLOS used his position to identify drivers who would be willing to transport the load of drugs. In the meantime, CESAR LARA kept watch over the drugs in a hotel room in El Paso.

By the end of June, the drug traffickers' plan was set in motion. Agents tracked the shipment as it moved from Texas to New Jersey. On July 3, MOTA and LARA-SERRANO travelled to the I-95 rest stop in order to oversee delivery of the load. The pair watched from a distance as LARA and CEBALLOS met the truck driver in a parking lot.

LARA and CEBALLOS carried a suitcase packed with 41 pounds of methamphetamine and 11 pounds of heroin from the cab of the tractor trailer to their car. Agents arrested them as they placed the suitcase in the car's trunk.

MOTA and LARA-SERRANO were arrested moments later. The truck driver, KENNETH STRAHORN, was also arrested. His case is being prosecuted by the New Jersey Attorney General's Office.

A search of the truck's cab yielded the remaining ten pounds of methamphetamine. The truck's trailer contained bulldozer parts.

Both MOTA and CEBALLOS have been charged under New York's kingpin statute (Operating as a Major Trafficker), which is the only felony narcotics charge in the state that carries a possible life sentence.

All of the four defendants under indictment by the Special Narcotics Prosecutor are charged with Conspiracy in the 2nd Degree, one count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 1st Degree, two counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 2nd Degree and three counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the 3rd Degree.

BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, said, "This case shows the direct link between drug trafficking in New York City and the Mexican cartels. A methamphetamine seizure of this size is rare in New York. It appears that the Mexican cartels are now attempting to directly distribute this dangerous drug in the New York area. Also remarkable is the purity level of the heroin in this case, ranging from 90 to 93 percent pure. In seizing this load the DETF maximized impact by cutting off the supply close to the source."

JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, said, "Over 700,000 glassine bags of methamphetamine and 150,000 bags of heroin – worth over \$6.5 million - were taken off of our streets. This is one of the largest and highest purity methamphetamine seizures with the end destination – the Big Apple. The New York Drug Enforcement Task Force and the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor worked collaboratively in order to disrupt this multi drug smuggling organization and arrest those responsible for dealing meth in and around NYC."

New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY said, "The arrests and indictments of these four individuals is welcome news for people who want to keep highly addictive illegal drugs like methamphetamine and heroin out of their neighborhoods. I commend the NYPD detectives, State Police, DEA and the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their efforts in shutting down these drug traffickers."

New York State Police Superintendent JOSEPH A. D'AMICO said, "These indictments and seizures are a direct result of the combined efforts of Federal, state, and local law enforcement to rid New York of a significant methamphetamine and heroin trafficking operation. This sends a strong message to drug dealers throughout the country that New York State will not tolerate drugs in its communities."

INDICTED DEFENDANTS**CHARGES**

Jose Mauro Mota 02/18/1951 550 West 172 nd Street, #4H New York, NY	Operating as a Major Trafficker Conspiracy 2 nd CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 2 nd – 2 cts CPCS 3 rd – 3 cts
Deivis Rafael Ceballos (aka David) 02/23/1973 26631 Cypresswood Drive Spring , TX	Operating as a Major Trafficker Conspiracy 2 nd CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 2 nd – 2 cts CPCS 3 rd – 3 cts
Romedi Lara-Serrano 12/02/1974 27 Peter Street Providence, RI	Conspiracy 2 nd CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 2 nd – 2 cts CPCS 3 rd – 3 cts
Cesar Primitivo Lara 11/10/1954 295 Wadsworth Ave, #2G New York, NY	Conspiracy 2 nd CPCS 1 st – 1 ct CPCS 2 nd – 2 cts CPCS 3 rd – 3 cts

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.