



Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York
Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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Major Seizure of Over 110 Pounds of Crystal Methamphetamine in Manhattan: Two Pennsylvania Men Arrested

An investigation into interstate drug trafficking resulted in the seizure of over 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of crystal methamphetamine from a car in Manhattan. Two men from Pennsylvania were found in the driver and front passenger seats and were subsequently arrested. The significant drug load is estimated to carry a street value of \$600,000 and is one of the largest methamphetamine seizures to result in charges by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP).

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Frank A. Tarentino III, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division, Interim New York City Police Commissioner Thomas G. Donlon, and New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James announced the charges following arraignments, which occurred yesterday afternoon in Manhattan Criminal Court.

A criminal complaint charges FERNANDO PENALOZA-REYES and RAUL CRUZ-TORRES with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree. Both men gave Reading, Pa. as their residence and were released immediately after arraignment without bail being set. Under New York State law, possession of methamphetamine, regardless of the quantity, is not a bail eligible offense.

The investigation was conducted by the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF), Group T-23, and SNP's Investigators Unit. NYDETF Group T-23 is comprised of agents and officers with the DEA New York Division, the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and the New York State Police.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "Methamphetamine, sometimes mixed with fentanyl, is claiming an increasing number of lives in our state and nation. Preventing more than 100 pounds of the drug from reaching our streets will save precious lives and prevent vulnerable communities from experiencing its destructive impact."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank A. Tarentino III said, "The arrest of these individuals and the seizure of this substantial size of crystal meth, shows the commitment the DEA and our law enforcement partners have in targeting drug traffickers and I'm thankful for the quick action of our special agents and law enforcement partners. We have seen time and time again the damage synthetic

drugs are having on our communities and DEA remains committed to saving lives and will continue to do everything we can to remove these drugs off our city streets.”

Interim NYPD Commissioner Thomas G. Donlon said, “This seizure and these arrests highlight NYPD investigators' unwavering commitment to saving lives by interrupting the flow of lethal drugs coming into our neighborhoods. In addition to overdose deaths, we know from experience that the drug trade is a locus point for violence and related criminal activity. I thank our partners at the DEA, the New York State Police, and the office of New York City’s Special Narcotics Prosecutor for their diligent work on cases like this and their dedication to our shared public safety mission.”

New York State Police Superintendent Steven G. James said, “Our strong law enforcement partnership is responsible for the success of these arrests, and I commend all the members and agencies involved for their outstanding work. Each arrest, each seizure is saving lives and decreases the additional crime that surrounds these illegal and dangerous operations. We will continue to work in unison with our partners to aggressively pursue criminals who perpetuate the distribution of these perilous drugs and the criminal activities associated with them.”

On Monday, September 16, 2024, at approximately 9 a.m., members of NYDETF Group T-23 were conducting surveillance and stopped a black Chevrolet Tahoe bearing Pennsylvania license plates in the vicinity of West Street and Battery Place in Lower Manhattan. PENALOZA-REYES was allegedly driving the vehicle and CRUZ-TORRES was seated in the front passenger seat. Agents and officers observed two large black duffel bags in the rear seat.

Members of NYDETF Group T-23 detained the two individuals and took custody of the vehicle while they obtained a court-authorized search warrant. At approximately 3:40 p.m., agents and officers removed the duffel bags from the rear seat and found approximately 50 vacuum sealed packages of a white rocky substance alleged to be crystal methamphetamine. The total weight of the packages was over 50 kilograms (110 pounds).

The results of DEA laboratory analysis of the crystal methamphetamine are pending.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg, Jr., and commended SNP’s Special Investigations Bureau and Investigators Unit, DEA New York Division, the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, the New York City Police Department and the New York State Police for their work on the case.

Defendants	Charges
Fernando Penaloza-Reyes Reading, Pa. Age: 43	CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct
Raul Cruz-Torres Reading, Pa. Age: 41	CPCS 2 nd – 1 ct

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