

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



THOMAS J. SPOTA
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

August 27, 2014

District Attorney Spota and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) announce LI cocaine ring bust

Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Deputy Special Agent in Charge Anthony Scandiffio today announced the takedown of a cocaine distribution network and the indictments of 19 people on charges of operating as a major drug trafficker and conspiracy to distribute cocaine.

The investigation began in June of last year when 20 kilos of cocaine bound for the residence of defendant Juan Funes, 39, on Bennett Place in Amityville, were seized in California by HSI agents working as part of a special task force in Los Angeles.

“Up until that time, Funes would take his California shipments and resell the cocaine to other drug dealers in Suffolk County,” said DA Spota.

“The California enforcement effort was a major disruption to the cocaine supply line to Long Island.”

Investigators learned that Funes had cross-country drivers delivering cocaine from southern California to Suffolk County

in cars and SUV's outfitted with "traps" to hide the narcotics. "It is believed the drugs were imported from Mexico to California and then transported here by couriers, one of them identified as Brizaura Rodriguez, 34, of Bellerose, Queens, who is charged with conspiracy for her role as a courier," said DA Spota.

The Suffolk investigation by HSI and the DA's Squad culminated in the execution of 16 search warrants and the subsequent indictments of 19 people including six men charged, DA Spota said, with operating as a major trafficker, a class "A" felony.

The Amityville Village Police Department played a critical role in the investigation by surveilling suspects and providing intelligence via local sources, as well as other investigative work.

Charged as major traffickers are JUAN FUNES of Amityville, RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ of West Babylon, and four Copiague men: ELVIS CABA, VICTOR NUNEZ , JUAN SANTANA, AND ANGEL VELEZ-FUNES. A dozen more suspects (listed below) are charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine and various other narcotics possession crimes. The district attorney said approximately 150 HSI agents and forty DA's Squad detectives executed the warrants and seized nineteen handguns; some of them loaded, some of them with defaced serial numbers, along with six assault rifles, and over \$400,000 in cash.

Homeland Security Investigations Deputy Special Agent in Charge Anthony Scandiffio said, "These arrests dismantle an

insidious drug trafficking organization that allegedly operated throughout Long Island for years, pushing its poison to countless users and ruining lives in the process.’

DA Spota said during the joint investigation, sixteen court-authorized telephone taps were employed.

The district attorney added that many of those arrested “lived two lives” by blending into the community by holding legitimate jobs, “a fact that is usually not the case when law enforcement encounters suspected cocaine dealers”, DA Spota said.

“Like Funes, who ran a cleaning service with thirty employees, many members of the drug ring worked,’ said DA Spota. Defendant Nunez is a taxi driver, defendants Rafael and Kevin Rodriguez co-own a gutter business, defendant Jesus Simi operates a delicatessen and Juan Rosario worked at two Eye Centers as an optical lens maker.”

HSI Deputy Special Agent in Charge Scandiffio said the agency will continue to work with local prosecutors and law enforcement agencies to reach the goals of safe streets and neighborhoods.

"Long Island residents deserve safe communities, free of dangerous drugs and the violence that comes with them, and HSI will continue to partner with local law enforcement to achieve these goals."

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Defendant List

Juan Santana (DOB: 5-4-84)

65 Meucci Avenue, Copiague, NY

1 count - Operating as a Major Trafficker

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: George Duncan

Juan Funes (DOB: 1-25-75)

40 Bennett Place, Amityville, NY

2 counts - Operating as a Major Trafficker

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: Brian Griffin

Angel Velez-Funes (DOB: 5-24-88)

94 27th Street, Copiague, NY

1 count - Operating as a Major Trafficker

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: Natasha Bellinger

Victor Nunez (DOB: 12-20-73)

1700 Great Neck Road, Copiague, NY

1 count - Operating as a Major Trafficker

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: Matt Rosenblum

Rafael Rodriguez (DOB: 4-16-80)

310 Broadway, W. Babylon, NY

1 count - Operating as a Major Trafficker

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: Phil Murphy

Elvis Caba (DOB: 12-12-74)

495 Campagnoli Avenue, Copiague, NY

1 count - Operating as a Major Trafficker

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: Phil Solages

Edilio Almonte (DOB: 2-29-76)

9 Martin Place, Babylon, NY

1 count - Conspiracy 2nd

Defense Attorney: Joe Cozzo

Cary Cognat (DOB: 12-6-74)
567 Bayport Avenue, Bayport, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Anthony LaPinta

Juan Espinal (DOB: 5-11-81)
523 South Pecan Street, Lindenhurst, NY
Arrest Date: 6-17-14
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Adam Moser

Charles Henderson (DOB: 5-3-54)
7 Iris Lane, Bay Shore, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Angelo Ferlito

Edgar Rivera-Galdamez (DOB: 1-12-82)
2560 Great Neck Road, Copiague, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Bill Collado

Brizaura Rodriguez (DOB: 11-30-79)
250-07 85th Avenue, Bellrose, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Michael Alber

Jose Ariel Rodriguez (DOB: 8-4-71)
740 Jackson Avenue, Lindenhurst, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Robert LaRusso

Kevin Rodriguez (DOB: 1-26-80)
402 4th Avenue, W. Babylon, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Matt Touhy

Juan Rosario (DOB: 7-15-68)
63 3rd Avenue, Lindenhurst, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Gerard McCloskey

Michael Rosati (DOB: 8-26-68)
265 Pleasantview Court, Copiague, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
1 count - Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 1st
Defense Attorney: John LoTurco

Michael Russo (DOB: 3-3-64)
114 Belmont Avenue, W. Babylon, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: William Wexler

Jesus Sime (DOB: 4-17-67)
757 Jackson Avenue, Lindenhurst, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
Defense Attorney: Gerard Donnelly

Scott Wilson (DOB: 1-8-70)
36 Juanita Avenue, Huntington, NY
1 count - Conspiracy 2nd
1 count - Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 2nd
Defense Attorney: Donald A. Mates, Jr.

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY THOMAS J. SPOTA

**CHARGED AS MAJOR
COCAINE TRAFFICKERS**

 Juan Santana	 Juan Funes	 Angel Velez-Funes
 Rafael Rodriguez	 Victor Nunez	 Elvis Caba



DISTRICT ATTORNEY THOMAS J. SPOTA

**CONSPIRACY TO
DISTRIBUTE COCAINE**

 Michael Russo	 Michael Rosati	 Scott Wilson	 Jesus Sime	
 Edilio Almonte	 Cary Cognat	 Juan Espinal	 Charles Henderson	 Edgar Rivera-Galdamez
 Brizaura Rodriguez	 Jose Ariel Rodriguez	 Kevin Rodriguez	 Juan Rosario	