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TEN ALLEGED TREN DE ARAGUA MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES INDICTED FOR GUN TRAFFICKING OPERATION IN QUEENS, THE BRONX AND MANHATTAN

Thirty-four Guns and "Pink Cocaine" Seized in Undercover Investigation; Defendants Arrested as Part of Operation Train Derail

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz and Police Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch announced today that 10 people have been indicted and variously charged with criminal sale of a firearm, criminal possession of a weapon, conspiracy and other crimes for their alleged roles in a gun trafficking operation that conducted firearm sales throughout New York City including Queens. A long-term undercover investigation, dubbed Operation Train Derail and done in conjunction with the NYPD, resulted in the seizure of 34 guns including two assault rifles and 48 grams of a drug cocktail known as tusi or "pink cocaine." The defendants are alleged members or associates of the Tren de Aragua gang, which originated in their native country of Venezuela, and the scope of the operation extended from New York as far as Texas and Colorado, with plans to expand to Colombia.

District Attorney Katz said: "As alleged, the defendants conspired to traffic and sell illegal firearms and drugs in New York City, with each defendant playing a different role in furtherance of Tren de Aragua's agenda. The geographic scope of their alleged conduct extended on a national level to include Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Texas, Florida, Colorado and internationally to Colombia. As a result of our investigation, 34 dangerous weapons are now off the streets, and we are dismantling this gang as it attempts to establish itself locally. Thank you to my Violent Criminal Enterprise Bureau, the NYPD's Firearms Investigation Unit and the brave undercover officer for their work on this investigation."

NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch said: "Tren de Aragua is one of the most dangerous gangs in the country, and the NYPD has taken significant action to shut down their operations in New York City. Today's indictment makes clear that we will not let them terrorize our streets with illegal guns, assault weapons, and dangerous narcotics that threaten all our communities. I want to thank Queens District Attorney Katz for her partnership in this effort and the dedicated detectives of the NYPD for their relentless work to make New Yorkers safe."

The defendants (**See Addendum**) are variously charged in a 120-count indictment with criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree and third degrees; criminal possession of a firearm; criminal possession of a weapon in the second and third degrees; criminal sale of a controlled substance in the fifth degree; attempted criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree; and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree. All of the defendants were charged with conspiracy in the fourth degree.

Six defendants were arrested Tuesday and two, Wrallan C. Meza and Rosemary T. Sanchez, were arraigned today before Supreme Court Justice Peter Vallone, who remanded them and ordered them to return to court March

12. Brayant O. Aguilar is expected to be arraigned later today. Alejandro Rondon was admitted to the hospital with an unrelated medical condition and will be arraigned at a later date.

Two were apprehended out of state -- Leoner A. Aguilera in Houston and Enyerling R. B. Zambrano in Miami – and will be arraigned at a later date.

Two defendants are in custody on other matters and will be arraigned at a later date. Enyerbert Blanco, the alleged ringleader, has been in custody in Florida since October after being charged in connection with a human trafficking case involving a 15-year-old girl. Oscar Sosa is in custody in Brooklyn on an unrelated federal firearms trafficking charge.

Two defendants have yet to be apprehended.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the charges and investigation, in June members of the Queens District Attorney's office and the NYPD's Firearms Investigation Unit began an undercover investigation into the trafficking of guns in Queens and elsewhere in New York City.

The investigation resulted in 22 different gun sales of guns, resulting in the seizure of 30 weapons, mostly handguns. Two AR-15 assault rifles were among those purchased.

Four additional weapons were seized Tuesday including two loaded semiautomatic pistols recovered from defendant Aguilar's vehicle pursuant to a court-authorized search warrant. Two loaded semiautomatic pistols were recovered during the arrests of Wrallan and Sanchez.

Many of the weapons were sold in broad daylight including several transactions in a shopping center parking lot in College Point. In another transaction, an AR-15 was placed in a garbage bag and sold in the middle of the afternoon in the Bronx.

The sale prices of the guns ranged from \$1,200 to \$2,800.

To coordinate the buys, the defendants communicated on cell phones through WhatsApp.

The defendants had different roles in the operation. Defendants Blanco, Meza and Zambrano allegedly procured the guns from sellers, mostly in gun friendly states. Some of the weapons had been reported stolen in those states.

Defendant Sosa allegedly provided weapons to sell from his own inventory. Defendants Aguilera, Sanchez, Aguilar and Rondon acted as the alleged couriers of the weapons.

Most of the defendants have been in the country since 2023.

The investigation revealed that the defendants discussed sending an inventory of firearms to Colombia in order to realize a bigger profit from their sales. The investigation thwarted attempts to traffic the weapons to Colombia.

Also purchased during the investigation were 48 grams of tusi or "pink cocaine," a drug cocktail that is dyed pink and contained MDMA and ketamine. The defendants vouched for the drugs sold by saying they used them.

The Queens District Attorney thanks local law enforcement members in Miami and Texas, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration New York Division and the US Marshals Regional Task Force for their assistance in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Assistant District Attorney Andres J. Sanchez of the District Attorney's Violent Criminal Enterprise Bureau and Sergeant Daniel Colon of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau under the supervision of Sergeant David Moore, Lieutenant Joseph Oliver, Deputy Chief Janet Helgeson, Assistant Chief Daniel O'Brien, and under the overall supervision of the Chief Investigator of the Detective Bureau Robert LaPollo along with Detective Michael Vila with the NYPD Firearms Investigation Unit under the supervision of Lieutenant Daniel Nicoletti, Captain Jeffrey Heilig, Commanding Officer of the Firearms Suppression Section, all under the overall supervision of Assistant Chief Jason Savino, Commanding Officer of the Specialty Enforcement Division, and Chief Joseph Kenny, Chief of Detectives.

Assistant District Attorneys Andres J. Sanchez and Loren Vetrano of the District Attorney's Violent Criminal Enterprises Bureau are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Jonathan Sennett, Bureau Chief, Philip Anderson and Barry Frankenstein, Deputy Chiefs, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of Investigations Gerard Brave.

ADDENDUM

Enyerbert Blanco, 24, of Archer Street, Bronx, has been indicted on charges including criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree and criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree. If convicted of the top count, he faces a potential maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

Wrallan C. Meza, 27, of 1730 Harrison Avenue, Bronx, has been indicted on charges including criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree and criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree. If convicted of the top count, he faces a potential maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

Leoner A. Aguilera, 21, of Houston, has been indicted on charges including criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second and third degrees and criminal possession of a firearm. If convicted of the top count, he faces a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

Brayant O. Aguilar, 21, of East 242nd Street, Bronx, has been indicted on charges including criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree and criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree. If convicted of the top count, he faces a potential maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

Rosemary T. Sanchez, 24, of 1730 Harrison Avenue, Bronx, has been indicted on charges including criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree and criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree. If convicted of the top count, she faces a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

Enyerling R. B. Zambrano, 29, of Tilden Avenue, Brooklyn, has been indicted on charges including attempted criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree. If convicted of the top count, she faces a maximum of 15 years in prison.

Alejandro J. Rondon, 19, of Denver, has been indicted on charges including criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree. If convicted of the top count, he faces a maximum of 15 years in prison.

Oscar Q. Sosa, 31, of Monroe, NY, has been indicted on charges including criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree and criminal possession of a firearm. If convicted of the top count, he faces a maximum sentence of seven years in prison.

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Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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