

# NEWS RELEASE

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**Luis A. Valentin, Prosecutor**

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## **17 ARRESTS MADE IN FREEHOLD AREA NARCOTICS OPERATION**

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The Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, along with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration - New Jersey Division, U.S. Marshal Service, Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, Ocean County Prosecutor's Office, Ocean County Sheriff's Department, and the Freehold Borough, Freehold Township, Howell Township, Matawan, Ocean Township and Toms River police departments, joined forces and investigated a narcotics operation based in Freehold Borough which was responsible for the distribution of various illegal drugs, including cocaine, heroin, ketamine (which is commonly referred to as "Special K"), marijuana, oxycontin and suboxone, throughout Monmouth County. The investigation culminated on April 30, 2010, with the arrest of 17 individuals.

The investigation commenced in the fall of 2009 when an undercover officer purchased cocaine from an individual who was a member of the network. Additional investigative tools were then utilized to identify other members of the narcotics distribution network as well as their methods of operation.

The investigation initially focused upon the heroin distribution activities of Pedro DeJesus, a/k/a "Peto," 36, of Freehold Borough, N.J. The investigation revealed that DeJesus supplied various illicit drugs to others.

The investigation also revealed that one of DeJesus' co-conspirators was John Simek, 63, of Tinton Falls, N.J. Between January 20, 2010 and March 25, 2010, Simek sold quantities of cocaine to an undercover law enforcement officer on five separate occasions. The aggregate amount of the cocaine which Simek sold to the undercover office was in excess of five ounces.

The investigation further revealed that another of DeJesus' co-conspirators was Monica Greiner, 35, of Matawan, N.J. During the investigation On one occasion during the investigation/between January 20, 2010, through March 25, 2010, Greiner sold 16 oxycodone pills to an undercover detective.

On April 16, 2010, a black Ford F-150 pick-up truck which was being operated by Hector Sostre was the subject of a lawful motor vehicle stop. Pedro DeJesus was a passenger in the pick-up truck at the time of the motor vehicle stop. A lawful search of the pick-up truck resulted in the seizure of the following items: a large plastic bag secreted in the dashboard behind the radio system which contained a quantity of suspected cocaine; a red digital scale; several empty small glassine baggies, some of which contained suspected cocaine residue; Suboxone and some loose green vegetation believed to be Marijuana. Both DeJesus and Sostre were arrested and charged with 2 counts of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance and 2 counts of Conspiracy to Possess a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute. Bail for both men was set at \$50,000 by Howell Township Municipal Court Judge Allan Kaplan. DeJesus was released on April 17, 2010, after he posted bail.

In addition to the above, the investigation resulted in the following individuals being charged on April 30, 2010:

Pedro DeJesus, 36, of Freehold, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. DeJesus is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$500,000 cash only bail. A condition of DeJesus' bail is a bail source hearing.

Monica L. Greiner, 35, of Matawan, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances; third degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance; third degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute; and third degree Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance. Greiner is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$150,000 cash only bail. A condition of Greiner's bail is a bail source hearing.

John Simek, 63, of Tinton Falls, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances; five counts of third degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance; five counts of second degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute; five counts of second degree Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance; first degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute; and first degree Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance. Simek is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$500,000 cash only bail. A condition of Simek's bail is a bail source hearing.

Hector L. Sostre, 48, of Freehold, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Sostre is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$150,000 cash only bail in addition to the previously set \$50,000 bail. A condition of Sostre's bail is a bail source hearing.

Justin M. Calderone, 28, of Howell Township, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Calderone is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$100,000 cash only bail. A condition of Calderone's bail is a bail source hearing.

Irma Pagan, 44, of Freehold, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Pagan is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$100,000 cash only bail. A condition of Pagan's bail is a bail source hearing.

Erica Pagan, 23, of Freehold, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Pagan is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$100,000 cash only bail. A condition of Pagan's bail is a bail source hearing. Erica Pagan is the daughter of Irma Pagan.

Steven C. Cordova, 29, of Freehold, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Cordova is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$150,000 cash only bail. A condition of Cordova's bail is a bail source hearing.

Gerald W. Pellegrini, 41, of Freehold, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Pellegrini is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$150,000 cash only bail. A condition of Pellegrini's bail is a bail source hearing.

Thomas Durante Sr., 53, of Roselle, New Jersey, is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Durante remains in the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$150,000 cash only bail. A condition of Durante's bail is a bail source hearing. Thomas Durante, Sr., is the father of Andrew Durante.

Andrew J. Durante, 21, of Toms River, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Durante is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$100,000 cash only bail. A condition of Durante's bail is a bail source hearing.

Antonio E. Santos, 38, of New York City, New York, is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Santos' bail has been set at \$500,000 cash only bail. A condition of Santos' bail is a bail source hearing. Santos is being held in New York pending extradition hearings.

Joshua G. Slanovits, 27, of Jackson, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Slanovits is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$100,000 cash only bail. A condition of Slanovits' bail is a bail source hearing.

Darrin Vasta, 43, of Jackson, N.J., is charged with second degree Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Dangerous Substances. Vasta is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$150,000 cash only bail. A condition of Vasta's bail is a bail source hearing.

Michael J. Palmieri, III, of Manalapan, NJ, is charged with third degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance; second degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute; third degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute; fourth degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance; second degree Unlawful Possession of a Handgun; second degree Possession of a Firearm While in the Course of Committing a Controlled Dangerous Substance Offense. Palmieri is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$200,000 bail set by Municipal Court Judge James Newman.

Scott Getta, 29, of Jackson, N.J., is charged with third degree Conspiracy to Possess a Controlled Dangerous Substances. Getta is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$50,000 cash only bail. A condition of Getta's bail is a bail source hearing.

Anthony J. Malacow, 31, of Seaside Heights, N.J., is charged with third degree Conspiracy to Possess Controlled Dangerous Substances. Getta is being held at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$50,000 cash only bail. A condition of Malacow's bail is a bail source hearing.

Bail for each of the individuals, except for Palmieri, who were arrested and charged as a result of this investigation was set by Monmouth County Assignment Judge Lawrence M. Lawson.

Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin stated, "These arrests demonstrate our collective resolve to investigate and prosecute these significant drug offenses. We will continue our partnerships with other law enforcement agencies to protect our communities."

Acting Special Agent in Charge John G. McCabe of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration - New Jersey Division stated, "The tentacle of drug trafficking groups reach up and down. D.E.A. works with our law enforcement partners at all levels and we will continue to dismantle drug trafficking organizations."

As a result of lawful searches conducted in furtherance of the investigation on April 30, 2010, officers seized approximately \$28,000 cash believed to be illicit drug proceeds.

If convicted, a third degree crime carries with it a maximum potential custodial sentence of up to a 5 year State Prison term; a second degree crime carries with it a maximum potential custodial sentence of up to a 10 year State Prison term; and a first degree crime carries with it a maximum potential custodial sentence of up to a 20 year State Prison term.

Despite these charges every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and State law.

This case is assigned to Assistant Prosecutor Christopher Matthews.

**Released: April 30, 2010**