



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
**Drug Enforcement Administration**  
New York Division  
Acting SAC James J. Hunt  
[www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## **DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE UNCOVERS HEROIN MILL IN THE BRONX, NY: \$8 MILLION WORTH OF HEROIN SEIZED**

### *Heroin Glassines Branded 'NFL', 'Government Shutdown' and 'iPhone'*

JANUARY 31 (MANHATTAN, N.Y.) James J. Hunt, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Division (DEA), Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton and Joseph A. D'Amico, Superintendent of the New York State Police, announced the discovery of multi-million dollar, high-volume heroin packaging location at 2910 Wallace Ave. Apt. #2E, Bronx, NY, and the seizure of 13 kilograms (33 pounds) of heroin worth \$8 million last night.

On January 30th, 2014, a team from the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force – comprised of DEA Special Agents, New York City Police Department Detectives and New York State Police Investigators – conducted surveillance in the vicinity of 2910 Wallace Ave., in the Williamsbridge section of the Bronx, as part of an ongoing investigation into heroin distribution organizations operating in the Northeast region of the United States. At approximately 4:30 p.m., agents and investigators observed an individual carrying two bags, one of which contained a green box. The individual, later identified as CRISTINO THEN, entered 2910 Wallace Ave. and walked up the stairs. Shortly thereafter THEN was observed exiting the building empty handed. Agents and officers stopped THEN to investigate his explanation as to why he was at the building.

Simultaneously, another individual was observed climbing out of a fifth floor window of the same building onto a fire escape. Agents apprehended this individual, later identified as AUGUSTIN RIVERA, aka "JOSE THEN," as he attempted to flee. Subsequently, Task Force members used the fire escape to access the same window, which was open, and entered a fifth floor apartment. Inside, they found a fully operational heroin mill. Agents and officers seized approximately 13 kilograms of

heroin (33 pounds) and hundreds of thousands of individual “glassine” bags stamped with numerous brand names, including “NFL”, “government shutdown,” “iPhone”, and “Olympics 2012.” Also recovered from the heroin mill were scales, 18 coffee grinders, rubber bands, baking soda and face masks. In typical heroin mill operations, coffee grinders are often used to cut pure heroin with a dilutant, such as baking soda. Individual dosages are then packaged into small glassine bags for retail distribution.

The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor is prosecuting RIVERA and THEN. A criminal complaint charges both defendants with one count each of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree. RIVERA and THEN are expected to be arraigned in Manhattan Criminal Court, 100 Centre St., this afternoon.

DEA Acting Special Agent in Charge James J. Hunt stated, "Heroin is pummeling the northeast, leaving addiction, overdoses and fear in its wake. The New York Drug Enforcement Task Force faced this threat with uniformed police work which resulted in the dismantlement of a heroin mill located in the Bronx that had resources to distribute over half a million heroin glassines throughout the streets of New York."

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, “A seizure of this size should open everyone’s eyes to the magnitude of the heroin problem confronting us. We’ve heard from public officials throughout the Northeast of soaring addiction within their own localities. Last night we seized 33 pounds of heroin in the Bronx, which could be transformed into millions of user-ready glassine packages, saturating the region. The brand names used are tied to upcoming events, indicating the savvy and sophistication of the heroin distribution ring.”

New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton said, “Thanks to the efforts of the investigators in this case an operation that would have led to the sale and distribution of illegal drugs on the streets of New York City has been thwarted.”

New York State Police Superintendent Joseph A. D’Amico said, “The hard work and partnership between the Drug Enforcement Administration, New York State Police, New York City Police Department and New York City Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor is responsible for preventing a large amount of a highly addictive and dangerous drug from making into our communities. These individuals were operating a multi-million dollar heroin mill out of an apartment with plans to distribute this illegal drug on our streets. I commend the considerable efforts and dedication of our agency personnel and our law enforcement partners who were able to pinpoint this drug activity and put a stop to this drug operation.

#### DEFENDANTS

#### CHARGES

Augustin Rivera, aka “Jose Then” 2170 University Ave. Bronx, NY 11/12/1978	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> - 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> - 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 ct
Cristino Then 2230 Woodhull Ave. Bronx, NY 07/24/1988	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> - 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> - 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 1 ct

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