



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES EIGHT MEMBERS
OF VIOLENT BRONX GANG WITH RACKETEERING, MURDER, AND
NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, DELANO A. REID, the Acting Special-Agent-in-Charge of the New York Division of the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"), and RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York ("NYPD"), announced today the unsealing of an Indictment charging eight members of a violent narcotics trafficking crew with racketeering, murder, attempted murder, narcotics trafficking, firearms possession, and other violent acts.

In a coordinated strike earlier today, approximately 100 officers and agents from the ATF, NYPD, and the United States Marshals Service, arrested five of the charged defendants. Two of the charged defendants were already in federal custody on separate charges. One of the charged defendants is still being sought. The five defendants taken into custody today, as well as the two defendants already in custody, are expected to be presented in Manhattan federal court later this afternoon. In connection with these arrests, federal and local law enforcement officers recovered, among other items, a loaded .45 caliber firearm, crack cocaine, and marijuana.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "For far

too long, narcotics trafficking and the violence it spawns have threatened this Bronx community. With today's Indictment, we have taken another significant step toward cleaning up this neighborhood so that residents no longer feel like they are putting their lives and the lives of their children in jeopardy when they walk out their front doors. Our commitment to working with our law enforcement partners to eliminate the scourge of violent gangs from the streets of New York remains unrelenting."

ATF Acting Special Agent-in-Charge DELANO A. REID said: "Today's arrests are law enforcement's second strike against this violent gang terrorizing the Melrose section of the Bronx and their blatant disregard for life is evident as detailed in the charges. We will continue to launch an attack against this armed violent gang, its drug dealers and murderers in order to give back the streets to the Courtlandt Avenue residents, and ATF will remain focused and steadfast on targeting violent crime in New York City."

NYPD Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY said: "I want to commend our detectives and federal partners who restored some measure of safety and comfort to neighborhood residents by identifying the nexus between guns and drugs in this case, and by making arrests that curtailed the retaliatory violence among competing crews that plagued Melrose."

According to the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

Eight individuals were charged for their participation in a racketeering enterprise based in the Courtlandt Avenue area of the Bronx, New York, ("Courtlandt Avenue Crew"). The Courtlandt Avenue Crew sold retail quantities of crack cocaine and marijuana, and defended its narcotics-distribution territory with violence and threats of violence.

As alleged in Count One of the Indictment, the Courtlandt Avenue Crew preserved and protected its own power and that of its members and associates through murder, attempted murder, and other acts of violence. The intended victims of these acts included rival narcotics traffickers, rival gang members, and individuals suspected of cooperating with law enforcement against members and associates of the Crew. Many members of the Crew were also members of a gang called "God's Favorite Children."

Two members of the Courtlandt Avenue Crew, JOSHUA MEREGILDO and MELVIN COLON are charged with committing murders in

aid of the Courtlandt Avenue Crew's racketeering enterprise, and in furtherance of its narcotics trafficking organization. Specifically, MEREGILDO is charged with the murder of Carrel Ogarro, which occurred on July 31, 2010, in the vicinity of 300 East 158th Street, Bronx, New York, and COLON is charged with the murder of Delquan Alston, which occurred on or about August 27, 2010, in the vicinity of 285 East 156th Street, Bronx, New York. Additionally, MEREGILDO and a third member of the Courtlandt Avenue Crew, EARL PIERCE are charged with the attempted murder of a rival drug dealer which occurred on September 13, 2010, in the vicinity of 321 East 153rd Street, Bronx, New York. MEREGILDO, COLON, and PIERCE also face firearms charges related to each of these acts of violence. All eight defendants are charged with racketeering conspiracy, narcotics conspiracy, and possession of firearms in furtherance of their narcotics conspiracy, including a .22 caliber firearm, a .380 caliber firearm, a nine millimeter firearm, and a .45 caliber firearm, among others.

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This case is assigned to United States District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY III.

The charges against each defendant and the corresponding maximum potential penalties are contained in charts attached to this press release.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the ATF and the NYPD. He also thanked the United States Marshals Service for their assistance, and added that the investigation is continuing.

The prosecution is being overseen by the Office's Violent Crimes Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys NOLA B. HELLER and ADAM FEE are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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U.S. v. Joshua Meregildo, et al.

Ct	Charge	Defendants	Maximum Penalties
1	Racketeering	JOSHUA MEREGILDO MELVIN COLON EARL PIERCE	Maximum term of life in prison
2	Racketeering conspiracy	JOSHUA MEREGILDO MELVIN COLON EARL PIERCE NOLBERT MIRANDA LEBITHAN GUZMAN AUBREY PEMBERTON FELIPE BLANDING JAVON JONES	Maximum term of life in prison
3	Conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering	JOSHUA MEREGILDO	Maximum term of ten years in prison
4	Murder in aid of racketeering	JOSHUA MEREGILDO	Death penalty or mandatory term of life in prison
5	Conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering	MELVIN COLON	Maximum term of ten years in prison
6	Murder in aid of racketeering	MELVIN COLON	Death penalty or mandatory term of life in prison
7	Conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering	JOSHUA MEREGILDO EARL PIERCE	Maximum term of ten years in prison
8	Assault and attempted murder in aid of racketeering	JOSHUA MEREGILDO EARL PIERCE	Maximum term of twenty years in prison

9	Narcotics conspiracy	JOSHUA MEREGILDO MELVIN COLON EARL PIERCE NOLBERT MIRANDA LEBITHAN GUZMAN AUBREY PEMBERTON FELIPE BLANDING JAVON JONES	Maximum term of life in prison; mandatory minimum term of ten years in prison
10	Murder in furtherance of a drug crime	JOSHUA MEREGILDO	Death penalty or maximum of life in prison; mandatory minimum of twenty years in prison
11	Murder in furtherance of a drug crime	MELVIN COLON	Death penalty or maximum of life in prison; mandatory minimum of twenty years in prison
12	Use of firearm in violent crime resulting in death	JOSHUA MEREGILDO	Death penalty or maximum of life in prison
13	Use of firearm in violent crime resulting in death	MELVIN COLON	Death penalty or maximum of life in prison
14	Discharge of firearm in connection with attempted murder in aid of racketeering	JOSHUA MEREGILDO EARL PIERCE	Maximum of life in prison; for MEREGILDO, mandatory minimum of twenty-five years in prison to be served consecutively to any other term imposed; for PIERCE, mandatory minimum of ten years in prison to be served consecutively to any other term imposed

15	Use, carrying, and possession of firearms in connection with narcotics conspiracy	JOSHUA MEREGILDO MELVIN COLON EARL PIERCE NOLBERT MIRANDA LEBITHAN GUZMAN AUBREY PEMBERTON FELIPE BLANDING JAVON JONES	Maximum of life in prison; for MEREGILDO, COLON and PIERCE, mandatory minimum of twenty-five years in prison to be served consecutively to any other term imposed; for all others, mandatory minimum of five years in prison to be served consecutively to any other term imposed
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Defendant	Residence
JOSHUA MEREGILDO	Bronx, New York
MELVIN COLON	Bronx, New York
EARL PIERCE	Bronx, New York
NOLBERT MIRANDA	Bronx, New York
LEBITHAN GUZMAN	Bronx, New York
AUBREY PEMBERTON	Bronx, New York
FELIPE BLANDING	Bronx, New York
JAVON JONES	Bronx, New York