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New Jersey Man Indicted After Joint Investigation Uncovers Massive Interstate Fentanyl Mailing Operation

Dozens of packages containing approximately 8,000 fentanyl pills addressed to areas throughout the country were intercepted by law enforcement at mailing facilities on Staten Island; Joint investigation led to takedown of fentanyl pill mill in Jersey City earlier this month

Staten Island, N.Y. — Richmond County District Attorney Michael E. McMahon today announced that a New Jersey man has been arrested and indicted on charges of first-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and related charges in connection with an interstate fentanyl mailing operation that utilized mailing facilities on Staten Island to ship thousands of fentanyl pills across the country. The joint investigation also led to the takedown of a fentanyl pill mill in Jersey City earlier this month when authorities seized approximately 60 kilograms of fentanyl.

The investigation was conducted by RCDA's Narcotics-Investigations Bureau, Homeland Security Investigations New York (HSI) led Border Enforcement Security Task Force (NYC BEST), the NYPD, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Division, the New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutors Office, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the Hudson County Prosecutors Office.

The defendant, Joel Manuel De Jesus Amparo, 23, was arraigned today in Staten Island Supreme Court on the indictment charging him with multiple counts of first-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and related charges for allegedly utilizing mail facilities on Staten Island, as well as other areas, to ship thousands of fentanyl pills across the country. In total, approximately 8,000 fentanyl pills were recovered from packages at mailing facilities on Staten Island throughout the course of the investigation. The judge ordered the defendant remanded. The Hudson County Prosecutor's Office is handling the case against the defendant in New Jersey.

Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, "The impact of this joint investigation, which began with a case in the Staten Island DA's office and resulted in the dismantling of a drug enterprise in New Jersey, will not only be felt in our own region, but will echo across the entire United States and help to potentially save millions of lives. Each one of the pills recovered from this major drug seizure was destined to reach areas across New York, New Jersey, and throughout the country, and contained enough fentanyl to carry its very own death sentence.

The dangers of fentanyl cannot be overstated. This deadly drug has contributed to over 80 percent of fatal overdoses on Staten Island since 2020, and it only continues to destroy more and more lives. While we will continue to offer help and treatment to those struggling with addiction illness, major drug traffickers who profit off the pain and suffering of others must be stopped and held fully accountable for their actions. We are grateful to have worked with such dedicated law enforcement partners on this investigation and remain committed to our continued partnership as we ensure those involved are brought to justice. This type of interagency and regional cooperation is necessary to battling the five-alarm fire that this plague has become, and I thank all of our partner agencies for their collaboration and hard work throughout this important case.”

“With the expansion of the global drug delivery market, HSI, along with our law enforcement partners, continue to disrupt criminal drug networks locally, internationally, and virtually. These illegally manufactured narcotics are often sold online and can contain deadly amounts of fentanyl, where just one pill can end a life,” **said Homeland Security Investigations New York Acting Special Agent in Charge Ricky J. Patel.** “In an effort to combat the opioid crisis and protect our communities, HSI proudly continues to host and support the New York City Border Enforcement Security Task Force, bringing together federal, state, and local partners to stop criminal networks operating with no regard for the safety of the American public.”

“The NYPD and our law enforcement partners will never waver in our commitment to rid our city of illegal drugs,” **said NYPD Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell.** “And this case, involving several agencies across multiple states, perfectly illustrates how working together makes us all safer and saves lives. Fentanyl is one of the deadliest substances on Earth, and anyone who seeks to profit by manufacturing, selling, and distributing this poison in our communities must face real consequences. To that end, I want to thank the Office of the Richmond County District Attorney, the DEA New York Division, Homeland Security Investigations New York, the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York, and everyone else involved in this case for their exceptional work.”

“Criminal drug Cartels are mass-producing fake pills which are fueling drug overdoses and poisonings nationwide,” **said DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank Tarentino.** “DEA lab testing reveals that four out of every ten pills contain a potential lethal dose of fentanyl. Seizures like this one, saves lives. Removing 3,600 potential lethal doses of fentanyl for distribution through our mail system, as well as shutting down a multi-million-dollar industrial pill mill in New Jersey keeps people safe and makes communities healthier. I applaud our law enforcement partners for their hard work and diligence in this investigation.”

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, “I commend Staten Island District Attorney Michael McMahon, his staff, and our law enforcement partners for their tireless dedication to following deadly drugs to their source. Counterfeit pills like the ones seized in this case cause many deaths, because their resemblance to a pharmaceutical drug is intended to give purchasers a false sense of security. My office is committed to working with our partners to intercept lethal narcotics before they hit the streets and to hold accountable those who seek to profit from addiction and death.”

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The case is being prosecuted by ADA Michele Molfetta, Chief of the Narcotics-Investigations Bureau, and ADA Matthew Gamberg.

The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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