



VISIT US:    

DARCEL D. CLARK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET
BRONX, N.Y. 10451
(718) 590-2234

86-2025

For Immediate Release
September 23, 2025

**RHODE ISLAND MAN INDICTED AS MAJOR TRAFFICKER FOR RECEIVING
SHIPMENT OF \$1.5 MILLION IN COCAINE FROM PUERTO RICO
Defendant Picked up 11 Kilos at a Package Store in Bronx**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a Rhode Island man has been indicted for Operating as a Major Trafficker for his role in a shipment of 11 kilograms of cocaine from Puerto Rico through John F. Kennedy International Airport to the Bronx.

District Attorney Clark said, “Thanks to a joint effort with our law enforcement partners, the defendant’s alleged attempt to profit off flooding our community with illegal drugs has been thwarted, and investigators have uncovered a cocaine operation spanning Ecuador, Puerto Rico, and the United States. The cocaine that was intercepted is worth \$1.5 million on the street.”

Homeland Security Investigations New York Special Agent in Charge Ricky J. Patel said, “Chris Alicea Rodriguez is accused of retrieving a package containing 11 kilograms of cocaine worth \$1.5 million, which was disguised as food, in an alleged attempt to further a dangerous drug trafficking operation. This case is a stark reminder of how traffickers attempt to exploit our everyday mail and parcel system to pump poison into our communities. Through the collaboration between HSI and our NYPD and Suffolk County task force partners, the Bronx District Attorney's Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration and Customs and Border Protection, this operation demonstrates how united efforts in law enforcement are essential to saving lives and safeguarding our communities.”

Drug Enforcement Administration New York Division Special Agent in Charge Frank A. Tarentino III said, “Once again, we see the determination and lengths individuals will go to, including the use of courier services, when attempting to smuggle illicit narcotics and poison into our communities. The DEA and our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners remain relentless in our mission to protect our neighborhoods and save lives.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Chris Alicea Rodriguez, 28, of Rhode Island,



DARCEL D. CLARK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET
BRONX, N.Y. 10451
(718) 590-2234

was arraigned September 22, 2025, on Operating as a Major Trafficker, first-degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, second-degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, two counts of third-degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, fourth-degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, seventh-degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, and second-degree Conspiracy before Bronx Supreme Court Justice George Villegas. The defendant is due back in court on December 17, 2025.

According to the investigation, on March 18, 2025, U.S. Customs and Border Protection detected cocaine in a package that arrived at JFK Airport and was destined for Remesas USA, a package store at 1567 Watson Avenue in the Bronx. At approximately 3:25 p.m. that day the defendant allegedly went to the store and picked up the package and was arrested as he attempted to leave. Upon further inspection, the box contained a cooler with 11 kilograms of cocaine in it, with an estimated street value of approximately \$1.5 million.

The defendant allegedly claimed he was paid \$500 dollars to pick up the package, which he had been told contained food. Upon his arrest, investigators also found a plane ticket to Puerto Rico on the defendant. After the execution of a search warrant of the defendant's phone, an extraction revealed extensive communication about shipping cocaine between Ecuador, Puerto Rico, and the United States on numerous occasions.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Alessandra Ambrosi, Supervisor in the Special Investigations Bureau, and Assistant District Attorney Nitin Aradhya of the Special Investigations Bureau, under the supervision of Craig Cecchini, Chief of the Special Investigations Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Denise Kodjo, Deputy Chief of Investigations Division and Wanda Perez Maldonado, Chief of Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Assistant District Attorney Cole McKee of the Special Investigations Bureau for assistance in the case.

District Attorney Clark thanked Homeland Security Investigations New York, the Drug Enforcement Administration's New York Division, and the HSI JFK Joint Narcotics Smuggling Unit, specifically NYPD Detective Demetrios Kekatos and Suffolk County District Attorney's Office Special Investigator James Trudden, for their work in the investigation.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.