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**RETIRED VICE DETECTIVE AND SEVEN ACTIVE DUTY NYPD POLICE OFFICERS  
INDICTED FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH PROSTITUTION RING  
IN QUEENS, BROOKLYN AND NASSAU COUNTIES**

*Forty-Nine Individuals Charged in All;  
Retired Detective Used Knowledge of NYPD and Contacts Within to Avoid Police Raids;  
Brothels Racked in Roughly \$2 Million In Span of 13 Months;  
Long-Term Investigation Also Dismantled Illegal Gambling Operation*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by New York City Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, today announced that a Queens County grand jury has indicted a retired NYPD detective for allegedly operating a complex prostitution ring and a gambling enterprise with his wife that also involved seven current members of service and nearly three dozen civilians. There were brothels operating in Queens, Brooklyn and Nassau counties and numerous gambling rooms set up in beauty salons and other businesses.

District Attorney Brown said, "The vast majority of NYPD police officers are honest and dedicated to enforcing and upholding the law. However, today's indictments of one former detective and seven current police officers of the NYPD dishonor the badge. The main culprit in this case - a retired detective - allegedly used his knowledge of the inner workings of the New York City Police Department to run a string of brothels in Queens, Brooklyn and Hempstead, Long Island. His alleged illegal enterprise also included using established lotteries to run illegal gambling in beauty salons and other locations in two boroughs. These operations stop today. I want to commend the hard work of the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau and members of my Rackets and Organized Crime and Integrity Bureaus for their hard work in breaking up these illegal industries."

Police Commissioner O'Neill said, "These NYPD officers, who swore an oath to uphold ideals greater than themselves, have ruined their own careers and reputations. More importantly, they have diminished the great work of tens of thousands of other honest and ethical cops. Everything we do in the policing profession is hugely dependent on the trust we build with the people who live and work in our neighborhoods. Whenever officers betray that trust by engaging in criminal behavior, they tarnish the shields they wear. The New Yorkers we serve will never tolerate this, and neither will this police department."

District Attorney Brown identified the main defendant as retired NYPD Vice Detective Ludwig Paz, 51, of Queens. Brooklyn South Vice Detective Rene Samaniego, 43, is accused of aiding Paz with both the prostitution ring and the gambling organizations. Sergeant Carlos Cruz, 41, and Detective Giovanni Rojas Acosta, 40, allegedly aided Paz by providing information on law enforcement activities related to prostitution. Paz, Samaniego, Cruz and Rojas Acosta are all charged with enterprise corruption.

Continuing, District Attorney Brown identified Sergeants Cliff Nieves, 37, and his brother Steven Nieves, 32, who are charged with promoting prostitution and other charge, for allegedly operating a brothel for the sole purpose of hosting a bachelor party. Police Officer Giancarlo Raspanti is accused of providing Paz with confidential police information in exchange for discounted sex at a brothel and Sergeant Louis

Failla is charged in connection with allegedly assisting Paz following a brothel raid. **(See Addendum with arraignment details and defense lawyer information below).**

District Attorney Brown said, according to the charges, an investigation began in April 2015, with a tip to the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau from a fellow police officer that active duty police officers and a retired detective were engaged in illegal operations. Investigators utilized court-authorized wiretaps, surveillance and other investigative techniques to identify the structure and individuals involved in the enterprises.

District Attorney Brown said that according the charges, the head of these enterprises was Paz, a

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retired NYPD vice detective, who worked with his wife, Arelis Peralta, running the prostitution and gambling ring. Paz is alleged to have operated or was partnered with and assisted with the day to day business at seven out of eight brothels. The brothels are located on Liberty and Onderdonk avenues in Queens; on Gates, Foster and Fourth avenues and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in Brooklyn and the final location is on Front Street in Hempstead, Long Island.

According to the charges, continued District Attorney Brown, Paz used his knowledge of NYPD Vice procedures to set up protocols for new prostitution clients. Knowing that detectives could not expose their genitals during their interactions with prostitutes, Paz required the new clients to undress and allow themselves to be fondled to pass the brothel's security screening. The retired detective also allegedly used his contacts within the NYPD to thwart raids by paying for confidential police information.

Furthermore, the prostitution ring is alleged to have taken in more than \$2 million between August 2016 and September 2017. The brothels used online ads to attract customers and after passing the screenings, clients would be allowed to choose a prostitute and paid anywhere from \$40 for 15 minutes of sexual activity up to \$160 for a full hour.

Continuing, said the District Attorney, according to the indictments, Paz and his wife Peralta are alleged to have profited from several illegal lottery businesses set up at a deli on Springfield Boulevard and within a beauty salon on 243<sup>rd</sup> Street, both in Queens, as well as at a beauty salon on Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, and other undisclosed locations. The operations included managers, runners and agents with working offices to place illegal bets on legal lotteries.

The investigation was conducted by Sergeant Jeremy Orenstein of the New York City Police Department's Internal Affairs Bureau Group 42, which is charged with investigating alleged corruption and serious misconduct by members of the NYPD, supervised by Captain Larry D. Chambers and under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioner Joseph J. Reznick. Also assisting in the investigation were members of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau and the Rackets and Organized Crime Bureau.

Assistant District Attorneys Bradley H. Chain, of District Attorney Brown's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, is prosecuting the case with Christine M. Oliveri, of the District Attorney's Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief of the Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau and James M. Liander, Bureau Chief of the Integrity Bureau, and Catherine C. Kane and Mary M. Lowenburg, Organized Crime and Rackets Deputy Bureau Chiefs, Khadijah Muhammad-Starling, Deputy Chief of the Integrity Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Wilbert J. LeMelle.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).

### **ADDENDUM**

1. LUDWIG PAZ (aka Agua), 51, of Queens Village, is charged with Enterprise Corruption, third-degree promoting prostitution, fifth-degree conspiracy, third-degree bribery, second-degree rewarding official misconduct, first-degree promoting gambling and second-degree hindering prosecution.\*

Paz was ordered held on \$525K bond/\$325K cash bail along with a bail sufficiency hearing. He was also ordered to surrender his passport and to return to court on October 30, 2018. He is represented by Frank Kelly, Esq. (718) 268-5858.

2. RENE I. SAMANIEGO, 43, of Queens, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy, second-degree hindering prosecution, third-degree promoting prostitution, third-degree bribe receiving, second-degree receiving reward for official misconduct and first-degree promoting gambling\*

Samaniego was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 24, 2018. He is represented by John Arlia, Esq.

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3. STEVEN NIEVES, 32, of Brooklyn, is charged with third-degree promoting prostitution and fifth-degree conspiracy. If convicted, he faces 2 1/3 to 7 years in prison.

Nieves was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by John Tynan, Esq. (212) 964-8038.

4. CLIFF NIEVES, 37, of Queens, is charged with third-degree promoting prostitution and fifth-degree conspiracy. If convicted, he faces 2 1/3 to 7 years in prison.

Nieves was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by Anthony Difiorio, Esq. (914) 997-0555.

5. GIOVANNY ROJAS ACOSTA, 40, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy, second-degree hindering and third-degree promoting prostitution.\*

Acosta was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by James Moschella, Esq. (212) 233-3800.

6. CARLOS CRUZ, 41, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Cruz was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by Anthony Difiorio, Esq. (914) 997-0555.

7. LOUIS FAILLA, 49, of Nassau County, is charged with four counts of official misconduct. If convicted, he faces up to one year in jail.

Failla was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by Anthony Difiorio, Esq.

8. GIANCARLO RASPANTI, 43, is charged with second-degree receiving reward for official misconduct and two counts of official misconduct. If convicted, he faces 1 1/3 to 4 years in prison.

Raspanti was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by xxx Elbaz, Esq.

9. ARELIS M. PERALTA (aka Maria), 43, of Queens, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Arelis was held on \$400K bond/\$150K cash bail along with a bail sufficiency hearing. She is ordered to return to court October 30, 2018 and is represented by Victoria Brown-Douglas, Esq. (718) 969-1226.

10. ORLANDO FERRER, 80, of Jamaica, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy, first-degree promoting gambling and second-degree hindering prosecution.\*

Ferrer was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 24, 2018. He is represented by Richard Spivak, Esq. (855) 979-8409.

11. ARISBEL GUZMAN, 20, of Queens Village, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Guzman was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 24, 2018. She is represented by David Bart, Esq. (718) 380-2496.

12. JARIELIS GUZMAN, 22, of Queens Village, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Guzman was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 24, 2018. He is represented by Edward Muccini, Esq. (718) 225-0205.

13. ALEXANDER DILONE, 22, of Queens Village, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Dilone was held on \$30k bond/\$7k cash bail and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. He is represented by Joseph Schioppi, Esq. (718) 263-7800.

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14. JENNIFER G. RODRIGUEZ, 32, of Flushing, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Rodriguez was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court October 31, 2018. She is represented by Elman & Adhami, Esqs. (516) 462-9341.

15. GERMANIA MARTE, 61, of Jamaica, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

16. VENUS M. MOSCOSO (aka Monica), 37, of Glendale, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Moscoso was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 31, 2018. She is represented by Elman & Adhami, Esqs. (516) 462-9341.

17. BIENVENIDA Y. CORDERO (aka Isabel), 49, of Brooklyn, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

18. DOMINGO NEGRON (aka Mingo), 60, of Brooklyn, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Negron was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 31, 2018. He is represented by Elman & Adhami, Esqs. (516) 462-9341.

19. BEATO S. LOPEZ (aka Simon), 51, of Brooklyn, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

20. CRISTOBAL E. CEPIN (aka Victor), 58, of Middle Village, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Cepin was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 31, 2018. He is represented by Mitchell Elman, Esq. (516) 462-9341.

21. HAROLD CEPIN, 26, of Philadelphia, PA, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

22. PEDRO A. RAMIREZ ESPINAL, 41, of Brooklyn, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy, first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Espinal was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 31, 2018. He is represented by Mitchell Elman, (516)462-9341.

23. PEDRO O. GUEVARA (aka Pedrito), 60, of West Hempstead, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy, first-degree promoting gambling, third-degree bribery and second-degree rewarding official misconduct.\*

Guevara was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 30, 2018. He is represented to Randall Unger, Esq. (718) 279-4500.

24. GASPAR A. BISHOP (aka Panama), 56, of Brooklyn, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

25. ELISA KRUMEICH, 38, of Woodside, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and first-degree promoting gambling.\*

Krumeich was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 30, 2018. She is represented by John Scarpa, Esq. (718) 281-2331.

26. DIONICIO RODRIGUEZ (aka Campeon/aka Ralphy), 47, is charged with third-degree promoting prostitution and fifth-degree conspiracy, enterprise corruption, second-degree hindering prosecution and third-degree promoting prostitution.\*

Rodriguez was held on \$140k bond/\$15k cash bail along with a bail sufficiency hearing and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. He is represented by Joseph Schioppi, Esq. (718) 263-7800.

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27. CHRISTIAN SANCHEZ ALONZO, 28, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy. \*

Alonzo was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. He is represented by Joseph Schioppi, Esq. (718) 263-7800.

28. LISA MARTINEZ, 41, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and third-degree promoting prostitution.\*

29. YASMIN ALONZO (aka Jazmin), 29, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Alonzo was released on her own recognizance, ordered to surrender her passport and to return to court on November 1, 2018. She is represented by Michael Anastasio, Esq. (718) 263-8400.

30. VICTOR SUAREZ (aka Sombra), 38, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Suarez was held on \$3500bond/\$3500 cash bail with a bail sufficiency hearing and ordered to return to court on November 1, 2018. He is represented by David Zucker, Esq. (718) 263-7676.

31. MIGUEL ANGEL AGUILAR (aka Cesar), 30, is charged with third-degree promoting prostitution and fifth-degree conspiracy and enterprise corruption.\*

Aguilar was held on \$8500k bond/\$1600 cash bail and ordered to return to court on October 25, 2018. He is represented by Philip Middler, Esq.

32. ANTHONY ROSA, 38, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

33. YGNACIO ALONSO (aka Ignacio), 43, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Alonso was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. He is represented by Joseph Schioppi, Esq.

34. MARIA MERCADO (aka Maria), 60, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Mercado was held on \$2500bond/\$750 cash bail and ordered to return to court on October 24, 2018. She is represented by Mark Laykind, Esq. (516) 354-6444.

35. MARIA MARTINEZ (aka Mary), 47, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

36. LESLY TAVARES, 21, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Tavares was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. She is represented by Steve Goldenberg, Esq. (718) 819-0740.

37. LUZ OQUENDO (aka Cookie), 54, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Oquendo was held on \$2500bond/\$750cash bail and ordered to return to court on October 31, 2018. She is represented by Jeff Cohen, Esq.

38. RAFAEL SANTIAGO (aka Ray), 46, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and third-degree promoting prostitution.\*

Santiago was released on his own recognizance and ordered to surrender his passport and return to court on October 31, 2018. He is represented by Warren Silverman, Esq. (718) 281-2311.

39. ANTHONY CENTENO (aka Pepe), 32, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and third-degree promoting prostitution.\*

40. RUTH GREEN (aka Luz), 58, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*  
Green was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on November 7, 2018. She is represented by Wyatt Gibbons, Esq.

41. ANGELICA CASIMIRO (aka Angelica Pendergrass aka Angie), 23, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

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Casimiro was released on her own recognizance, ordered to surrender her passport and to return to court on November 1, 2018. She is represented by Michael Siff, Esq. (718) 544-7600.

42. JESSICA NEDIORTEGA RODRIGUEZ (aka Ruby), 37, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Ortega Rodriguez was released on her own recognizance, ordered to surrender her passport and return to court November 1, 2018. She is represented by Kevin O'Donnell, Esq. (718) 261-4500.

43. NADELDA MONTALVO (aka Blondie), 47, is charged with enterprise corruption, fifth-degree conspiracy and third-degree promoting prostitution.\*

Montalvo was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 31, 2018. She is represented by Scott Bookstein, Esq. (718) 275-7500.

44. MARIA MARTINEZ (aka Maruca), 57, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Martinez was released on her own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. She is represented by Joseph Schioppi, Esq.

45. BRIAN FROHMAN, 24, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Frohman was released on his own recognizance and ordered to return to court on October 29, 2018. He is represented by Sally Butler, Esq. (718) 279-4500.

46. PARSY NUNEZ (aka Carmen/aka Mariela), 41, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

47. ISSAC SCHWARTZ (aka Shraggy), 44, is charged with enterprise corruption and fifth-degree conspiracy.\*

Schwartz was released on his own recognizance. He is represented by Benjamin Lieberman, Esq. 718 677-8030.

48. CLAUDIO PETERS (aka Brazil), 29, is charged with third-degree promoting prostitution. If convicted, he faces 2 1/3 to 7 years in prison.

Peters was released on his own recognizance, ordered to surrender his passport and to return to court November 1, 2018. He is represented by Andrew Worgan, Esq. (718) 544-4026.

49. ANA ALMONTE, 29, is charged with third-degree promoting prostitution. If convicted she faces 2 1/3 to 7 years in prison.

Almonte was released on her own recognizance, ordered to surrender her passport and to return to court on November 1, 2018. She is represented by Michael Schwed, Esq. (718) 263-7676.

\*All defendants charged with enterprise corruption face a minimum of one to three years in prison and a maximum of 8 1/3 to 25 years in prison, if convicted.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The addresses for the alleged brothels are below:

180-08 Liberty Ave., Queens

203 Onderdonk Ave., Queens

182-35 Jamaica Ave., Queens

483 Fourth Ave., Brooklyn

880 Gates Ave., Brooklyn

2007 Foster Ave., 3C, Brooklyn

206 42nd St., Brooklyn

555 Front Street, Hempstead, Long Island