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2 TONS OF COKE SEIZED

By [Andy Soltis](#)

January 30, 2003 5:00am

Federal agents seized two tons of cocaine and busted four members of a Queens-based drug ring yesterday as they announced the largest narcotics seizure in the city's history.

The ring imported cocaine from South America through Mexico to Maspeth, using a hollowed-out tanker of vegetable oil to make the final delivery, investigators said.

The cocaine seized is worth an estimated \$40 million wholesale, they said.

That would be \$120 million on the street, where it could be cut into 2 million retail doses, said federal authorities.

"This is a record seizure in the New York area," said Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent-in-Charge Anthony Placido.

All together, 20 DEA agents took part in the raids, he said.

Placido said one suspect was captured after agents chased his minivan through Queens.

Inside the minivan they found 800 pounds of cocaine, which alone is one of the biggest drug busts in recent history, with a street value of about \$24 million.

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The tanker, which had once been filled with vegetable oil, is believed to have been used to transport the drugs to the city in its hollow walls, investigators said.

Vegetable oil from the tanker was found in barrels inside the warehouse.

Officials said the oil was apparently siphoned out of the tanker to make room for the cocaine.

Placido said the equipment that was used to cut open the tanker's interior walls was discovered inside the warehouse.

The city's special narcotics prosecutor, Bridget Brennan, said no seizure in the past 15 years came close to yesterday's haul.

In May, federal agents and city and state police raided a vacant warehouse in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and seized what was described as more \$54 million worth of cocaine.

Investigators said that haul was the biggest since a raid conducted by Customs agents in Long Island City, Queens, in 1989.

The four men arrested yesterday, from the Dominican Republic and Mexico, were charged with first-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance and second-degree conspiracy.

They each face 25 years to life in prison if convicted. *With Post Wire Services* (p. 7 Metro)

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