



**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**  
*Southern District of New York*

U.S. ATTORNEY PREET BHARARA

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
Ellen Davis, Carly Sullivan,  
Jerika Richardson  
(212) 637-2600

FBI  
Tim Flannelly, Jim Margolin  
(212) 384-2100

NYPD  
Paul J. Browne  
(646) 610-8989

**EIGHT ACTIVE AND RETIRED NYPD OFFICERS AND FOUR OTHERS**  
**CHARGED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT WITH CONSPIRING**  
**TO DISTRIBUTE FIREARMS, STOLEN GOODS, OR BOTH**

*Charges Include Conspiring To Distribute M-16 Rifles And Handguns With Altered  
Serial Numbers*

*Defendants Received Over \$100 Thousand In Cash Payments For Their Alleged Participation  
In The Schemes*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JANICE K. FEDARCYK, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York ("NYPD"), today announced charges against 12 defendants, including eight active-duty and retired NYPD Officers, for participating in a variety of schemes involving the illegal interstate transportation of stolen goods. According to the Complaint filed today in Manhattan federal court, from September 2010 to the present, some or all of the defendants conspired to transport across state lines: stolen slot machines; firearms, including three M-16 rifles, one shotgun, and 16 handguns, the majority of which had been defaced to remove or alter the serial number; and stolen cigarettes and counterfeit goods. In total, the goods that the defendants allegedly illegally transported carried a street value of over \$1 million.

The active-duty NYPD Officers charged are: WILLIAM MASSO, EDDIE GORIS, and JOHN MAHONEY, who work in Brooklyn's 68<sup>th</sup> precinct; ALI OKLU, who works as a member of the Brooklyn South Task Force; and GARY ORTIZ, who works in Brooklyn's 71<sup>st</sup> precinct. The retired NYPD Officers charged are JOSEPH TRISCHITTA, MARCO VENEZIA, and RICHARD MELNIK, who worked in Brooklyn's 68th precinct. TRISCHITTA and VENEZIA were active-duty officers for part of the time that they allegedly committed the charged offenses. Also charged are, former NYC Department of Sanitation Police Officer ANTHONY SANTIAGO, active-duty New Jersey Corrections Officer DAVID KANWISHER, and associates MICHAEL GEE and ERIC GOMER. The defendants were arrested this morning and are expected to be presented in Manhattan federal court later today.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "The Complaint describes how a group of crime fighters took to moonlighting as criminals; how a gang of police officers who should have been keeping guns off the street instead smuggled 20 firearms into the City; and how a number of men once charged with enforcing the law are now charged with breaking it. An officer who betrays his badge betrays every honorable officer, as well as every member of the public. The NYPD is the finest police force in the world, and has done more to protect our city and keep us safe than any comparable force in any city, anywhere. I am proud to work with a police department that has the courage to police itself, as is it has shown today. "

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge JANICE K. FEDARCYK said: "This morning's arrests are the culmination of a long-term undercover investigation that began in 2009. These crimes are without question, reprehensible – particularly conspiring to import untraceable guns and assault rifles into New York. The public trusts the police not only to enforce the law, but to obey it. These crimes, as alleged in the Complaint, do nothing but undermine public trust and confidence in law enforcement. We are committed to continuing to work with the Internal Affairs Bureau of the NYPD to root out corruption, wherever it may be. "

Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY said: "I want to commend the U.S. Attorney and the FBI who, together with the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, today arrested a dozen individuals, five of them police officers, who believed they were helping to transport stolen goods, as well as firearms. The fact that the goods really weren't stolen and the guns didn't work doesn't lessen culpability, especially for those who had sworn an oath to uphold the law. The most disturbing aspect of this sting was that, according to the Complaint, William Masso actually saw what he must have certainly believed were functioning guns. He had no way of knowing that the guns to be transported had been rendered inoperable. It was a betrayal of the highest order of an officer's oath. "

According to the Complaint unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

In late 2009, MASSO met a confidential informant ("CI") who was working for the FBI. During conversations over the next several months, MASSO allegedly expressed an interest in obtaining and selling cigarettes and other contraband. At the direction of law enforcement, the CI began to supply MASSO with cigarettes that the CI described as having been stolen from out of state, and MASSO sold these cigarettes. In the Spring of 2010, the CI and MASSO discussed whether MASSO could assist the CI and the CI's purported boss, who was really an undercover law enforcement agent, ("UC-1"). MASSO agreed, saying he could get a "retired cop, active cop, ex-cop, bad guy...You want a guy who beat the s--t out of somebody who bothers him, we got that. We got cops with vests and guns. "

#### *The Stolen Slot Machine Scheme*

Between October 2010 and March 2011, the defendants conspired to transport what they believed to be stolen slot machines across state lines. Specifically, on October 5, 2010, MASSO, SANTIAGO, GORIS, GOMER and OKLU transported a number of purportedly stolen slot machines via U-Haul trucks from New Jersey to New York. Subsequently, on March 25, 2011, MASSO, SANTIAGO, GORIS, and OKLU along with VENEZIA, MAHONEY, MELNIK, TRISCHITTA, and KANWISHER transported a number of purportedly stolen slot machines from New Jersey to New York. In preparing for, and carrying out this scheme, the defendants

specifically discussed using their credentials and knowledge as law enforcement officers. For example, in a meeting on March 24, 2011, MASSO explained that the men should carry their law enforcement badges during the operation and, if stopped, should say they were police officers working off-duty to deliver items another person had purchased at an auction. MAHONEY described a route they could take in order to avoid detection by law enforcement, and OKLU advised that the vans should not travel together on the highway. For their participation in the March 2011 transport, MASSO was paid \$10,000 in cash; SANTIAGO was paid \$7,000 in cash; GORIS and TRISCHITTA were each paid \$5,000 in cash; MELNIK and OKLU were each paid \$4,000 in cash; KANWISHER was paid \$3,000 in cash; and MAHONEY and VENEZIA were each paid \$2,000 in cash.

#### *The Stolen Cigarettes and Stolen Merchandise Scheme*

On a number of occasions between Fall 2010 and September 2011, the defendants conspired to transport what they believed to be stolen cigarettes and stolen merchandise, such as handbags and clothing, across state lines. On one occasion in May 2011, GORIS, OKLU, SANTIAGO, ORTIZ, KANWISHER and GOMER traveled from the New York City area to Virginia to take part in a purported theft of more than \$500,000 worth of cigarettes from two trucks. On the way to Virginia, SANTIAGO, along with the CI and UC-1, stopped to buy a bolt cutter and duct tape to prepare for the theft. The men then transported approximately 270 cases of cigarettes back to New York and, along with MASSO and GEE, they sold the cigarettes to various buyers. For their participation in the May 2011 cigarette transport, SANTIAGO received \$23,000 in cash; GORIS received \$20,000 in cash; OKLU received \$15,000 in cash; KANWISHER and ORTIZ received \$10,000 in cash each; GOMER received \$5,000 in cash; and MASSO received \$9,000 in cash plus cases of the purportedly stolen cigarettes.

#### *The Firearms Schemes*

As alleged in the Complaint, in July 2011, MASSO, SANTIAGO and GEE conspired to sell a shotgun to UC-1 for \$2,000. After providing the shotgun, MASSO told UC-1 that the gun was just a "sample" and that they could get anything "from A to Z." GEE promised UC-1 six to eight guns a month. MASSO, SANTIAGO and GEE had subsequent discussions with UC-1 about the possibility of obtaining handguns and transporting them interstate.

Ultimately, UC-1 informed MASSO that he could obtain firearms but needed them transported to New York. Subsequently, on September 22, 2011, MASSO, GORIS, OKLU, ORTIZ, SANTIAGO, KANWISHER, TRISCHITTA, and VENEZIA transported numerous firearms and purportedly stolen cigarettes from New Jersey to New York. The firearms – all of which had been rendered inoperable by the FBI – included three M-16 rifles, one shotgun, and 16 handguns – the majority of which had been defaced to remove or alter their serial numbers. The defendants transported the firearms, as well as cigarettes they believed to have been stolen from New Jersey to Long Island. The firearms were delivered to another undercover agent, and the cigarettes were sold to various buyers, including individuals who were not undercover law enforcement agents, prearranged by MASSO and SANTIAGO. For participating in this scheme, MASSO was paid \$6,000 in cash; GORIS, ORTIZ, TRISCHITTA, OKLU, KANWISHER and VENEZIA were each paid \$5,000 in cash; and SANTIAGO was paid \$2,000 in cash. On October 5, 2011, MASSO met with UC-1 at a hotel in Manhattan and paid UC-1 \$147,600 in cash, representing UC-1's share of the proceeds from selling the purportedly stolen cigarettes.

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A chart identifying each defendant, the charges, and the maximum penalties, is attached to this release.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the FBI and the Internal Affairs Bureau of the NYPD.

This prosecution is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit and the Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys CARRIE H. COHEN, BRENT S. WIBLE, and AMANDA KRAMER are in charge of the prosecution.

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

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U.S. v. Masso, et al.

<b>DEFENDANT</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>RESIDENCE</b>
WILLIAM MASSO	47	Brooklyn, NY
EDDIE GORIS	31	Queens, NY
ALI OKLU	35	Queens, NY
GARY ORTIZ	27	Brooklyn, NY
JOHN MAHONEY	26	Staten Island, NY
JOSPEH TRISCHITTA	42	Staten Island, NY
MARCO VENEZIA	46	Brooklyn, NY
RICHARD MELNIK	42	Staten Island, NY
ANTHONY SANTIAGO	45	Tuckerton, NJ
DAVID KANWISHER	38	Tuckerton, NJ
MICHAEL GEE	40	Staten Island, NY
ERIC GOMER	28	Staten Island, NY

<b>COUNT</b>	<b>CHARGE</b>	<b>DEFENDANTS</b>	<b>MAXIMUM PENALTIES</b>
<b>1</b>	Conspiracy to Transport Firearms Interstate	WILLIAM MASSO EDDIE GORIS ALI OKLU GARY ORTIZ JOSEPH TRISCHITTA MARCO VENEZIA ANTHONY SANTIAGO DAVID KANWISHER	Five years in prison
<b>2</b>	Conspiracy to Transport Defaced Firearms Interstate	WILLIAM MASSO EDDIE GORIS ALI OKLU	Five years in prison
<b>3</b>	Conspiracy to Sell a Firearm to an Out of State Resident	WILLIAM MASSO ANTHONY SANTIAGO MICHAEL GEE	Five years in prison
<b>4</b>	Conspiracy to Transport and Receive Stolen Merchandise	WILLIAM MASSO EDDIE GORIS ALI OKLU GARY ORTIZ JOHN MAHONEY JOSPEH TRISCHITTA MARCO VENEZIA RICHARD MELNIK ANTHONY SANTIAGO DAVID KANWISHER MICHAEL GEE ERIC GOMER	Ten years in prison