



OTSEGO COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

172 County Highway 33W
Cooperstown, New York 13326

MEDIA RELEASE

RICHARD J. DEVLIN, JR
SHERIFF



CAMERON S. ALLISON
UNDERSHERIFF

Otsego County Sheriff Richard J. Devlin, Jr, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the New York Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration James J. Hunt, Otsego County District Attorney John M. Muehl and Oneonta Police Department Chief Dennis R. Naylor announce the arrest of Nicholas Michael Torres AKA "J", age 22, of 3695 Briar Hill St, Mohegan Lake, NY. Torres was arrested following simultaneous multi-year long investigations into heroin and oxycodone powder trafficking in and around Otsego County. The investigation was known as "Operation Dial Tone" and "Operation White Gold" respectively.

Over the past four years, the Otsego County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Division, the Albany DEA District Office and Oneonta Police Department Detective Bureau have spent hundreds of man hours investigating the heroin and oxycodone drug trafficking organizations that have led to the arrest of over thirty individuals. Law enforcement officers have used a variety of tools during the extensive investigation to include executing search warrants, court orders, the use of confidential informants/sources, undercover police officers to purchase narcotic drugs, confidential source debriefings, and physical/electronic surveillance.

In 2011, Nicolas Torres distributed narcotics for the Jose "Flip" Rodriguez heroin drug trafficking organization (DTO) under the direction of then DTO director Jamele Baez. On October 30, 2011, Sheriff's Office investigators used a confidential informant to purchase oxycodone powder from Torres in the Southside Mall parking lot in the Town of Oneonta, NY. Investigators were eventually able to identify Nicholas Torres as the person who sold the oxycodone. In June 2014, an arrest warrant was issued for Torres from the Town of Oneonta Court for criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and entered into the statewide computer database.

The investigation revealed Jose Rodriguez, who was incarcerated in the Otsego County Jail at the time, and Jamele Baez had obtained oxycodone powder in October 2011. The drugs had been covertly stolen from Covidien's Hobart, NY plant and they had workers selling the narcotic drugs throughout Otsego and Delaware Counties. The oxycodone powder was linked back to drug kingpin Dante Darren Major who was convicted at trial in Otsego County Court of operating as a major trafficker for the diverted oxycodone powder and was sentenced to 55 years to life in prison.

On July 29th Torres was taken into custody on the arrest warrant by the Putnam County Sheriff's Office during a traffic stop in the Town of Carmel, NY. Otsego Sheriff's Office investigators traveled to Carmel where they arrested Torres on the drug warrant and returned him to Otsego County. Torres was arraigned in the early morning hours on July 30th by Town of Oneonta Judge Bruce A. Smith and was remanded to the Otsego County Jail on \$25,000 bail returnable in the Town of Oneonta Court on August 21st at 4:00 p.m. District Attorney John M. Muehl and Chief A.D.A. Michael F. Getman are prosecuting the case.

Sheriff Richard J. Devlin, Jr said, "This arrest successfully culminates two major, multi-year investigations. Following both the trail of heroin into Otsego County from New York City and oxycodone powder from Delaware County to neighboring counties and the New York metropolitan region, investigators were able to dismantle two elaborate drug trafficking organizations. The scary part was the knowledge that though both these organizations were completely autonomous, they provided assistance to each other during severe situations. After some of their members started to get arrested, both organizations rallied to help each other. The extreme dedication by those working the case is the only reason they were able to continue their investigation efforts. Of course, without the assistance and teamwork with our Federal and Local partners these cases could have never culminated with such success. From the lead case agent to transport and booking officers, everyone showed their dedication and professionalism. You can feel confident that through the work of these investigators, deputies, detectives, police, parole and probation officers and special agents not only is Otsego County safer today, but so is the whole State of New York."

DEA Acting Special Agent-in-Charge JAMES J. HUNT stated: "Law enforcement has combined multiple resources in order to fight the increased abuse of pharmaceutical drugs. Through concerted efforts with our local and state law enforcement partners, DEA has focused on those individuals who illegally purchase and distribute pharmaceutical drugs. Medication legally prescribed for individuals in pain is beneficial pain management, but as with any controlled substance when it is abused and sold for no other reason than to make a profit it becomes a danger to the public and a violation of law."

The following agencies assisted with drug trafficking organizations investigations: Cooperstown Police Department, Delaware County Sheriff's Office, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Homicide Bureau, New York City Police Department, New York State Department of Correctional Services and Community Supervision; New York State Division of Parole Utica Office; Otsego County District Attorney's Office, Otsego County District Attorney's Special Investigation Unit and the Otsego County Probation Department.

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For additional information concerning this release please contact:

Senior Investigator Michael F. Ten Eyck @ 607 547-4363
DEA S.A. Erin L. McKenzie-Mulvey @ 212 337-2906

MISSION STATEMENT

The Otsego County Sheriff's Office is committed to partnering with the people we serve in order to prevent crime and injustice. We are driven to enhance the quality of life of our community as we hold ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism, performance and ethics.

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Administration 607-547-4270	Civil Division 607-547-4271	Pistol Permits 607-547-6451	Criminal Division 607-547-4273	Corrections Division 607-547-4252	Fax Number 607-547-6413
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