



Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor For the City of New York  
Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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## Approximately \$150K in Narcotics Disguised as Children's Gifts Recovered in Brooklyn and the Bronx: Three Indicted

*Nearly nine pounds of suspected cocaine and over \$74k cash seized*

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, James J. Hunt, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New York Division, New York City Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, Angel M. Melendez, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York, New York State Police Superintendent George P. Beach II, Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark announced today the arrest and indictment of three individuals in connection with alleged cocaine trafficking in Mill Basin, Brooklyn. One of the defendants is a bus driver employed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

Defendants CHRISTOPHER KELLY, 51, SALVATORE CAPECE, 63, and ROBERT WOOLRIDGE, 38, are scheduled to be arraigned today before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Neil Ross, Part 23, 100 Centre Street. KELLY and CAPECE face a top count of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree. All three defendants are charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First and Third Degrees and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia in the Second Degree.

The indictment is a result of an investigation by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor and the New York Strike Force, a crime-fighting unit comprising federal, state and local law enforcement agencies supported by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDEF) and the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). The Strike Force is housed at the DEA's New York Division and includes agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, the New York State Police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement – Homeland Security Investigations, the U. S. Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives , U.S.

Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Marshals Service, New York National Guard, the Clarkstown Police Department, U.S. Coast Guard, Port Washington Police Department and New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

KELLY and CAPECE were arrested on June 19, 2018, while WOOLRIDGE, the MTA bus driver, was arrested the following week. The arrests stemmed from the alleged sale of two kilograms of cocaine (4 ½ pounds) for nearly \$74,300 outside a nail salon at 5821 Avenue T in Mill Basin, where KELLY worked as a manager. At approximately 5 p.m. on June 19, 2018., agents and officers conducting surveillance outside the nail salon as part of an ongoing narcotics investigation observed KELLY retrieve a package wrapped in pink Minnie Mouse gift wrap from the trunk of an orange Dodge Challenger registered to CAPECE. KELLY handed the package to WOOLRIDGE, who in turn gave KELLY a Burberry shopping bag. WOOLRIDGE drove off with the gift wrapped package in an Audi.

That evening, agents and officers with Strike Force Group Z-41 observed CAPECE exit the nail salon. At approximately 7:30 p.m., CAPECE and KELLY arrived together at KELLY's residence located at 6423 Avenue T several blocks from the nail salon. KELLY carried what appeared to be the same Burberry shopping bag and a second package wrapped in pink Minnie Mouse gift wrap. Agents obtained a court authorized search warrant for both the residence and the Dodge Challenger. KELLY and CAPECE were inside the residence at the time of the search. Upon entering the living room, agents found the gift wrapped package had been partially opened, exposing two kilograms of suspected cocaine. The Burberry shopping bag was also in the living room and contained nearly \$74,300 cash. A search of the trunk of the Dodge Challenger yielded a kilo press often used in packaging narcotics.

Shortly before 7 a.m. on June 28, 2018, agents stopped WOOLRIDGE in a vehicle near his residence in the Throgs Neck neighborhood of the Bronx as he was on his way to his job as an MTA bus driver. WOOLRIDGE permitted the agents to enter his residence, located at 3703 East Tremont Avenue, and retrieved a UPS bag from a kitchen cabinet. Inside the bag were two kilograms of suspected cocaine worth up to \$75,000, as well as scales and packaging materials. Final laboratory test results on the narcotics are pending.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan commended her office's Special Investigations Bureau, DEA New York Division, the New York State Police and all agencies associated with Strike Force Group Z-41 for their work on the case. Ms. Brennan also thanked Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan said, "Brazen conduct, flashy cars and a soft spot for Minnie Mouse were the trademarks of the cocaine trafficking operation announced today. Defendants are charged with shamelessly exchanging more than four pounds of cocaine for \$74,000 in cash in a commercial area in broad daylight. I thank our law enforcement partners for their success in upending this organization."

DEA Special Agent in Charge James Hunt stated, "This case gives a new meaning to looking a gift horse in the mouth. Shortly after giving and receiving a 'gift' of cocaine, the defendants were arrested for their scrupulous drug trafficking scheme. These arrests demonstrate that the Strike Force, working with the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, is a seasoned law enforcement unit that is aware of the tricks traffickers use to elude law enforcement."

New York State Police Superintendent George P. Beach II said, "Today's arrests and indictments are the result of an aggressive strategy to stop illegal drug trafficking and keep cocaine and other deadly drugs off our streets. Together, with our partners in federal, local and

state law enforcement, we have dismantled a dangerous cocaine trafficking operation and stopped the infiltration of a large quantity of narcotics into our communities. We will continue to work vigilantly to put dangerous individuals like these three criminals behind bars.”

New York City Police Commissioner James P. O’Neill said, “Cases like this highlight how invaluable our law enforcement partnerships are at the local, state, and federal levels. I commend everyone involved in this investigation, particularly the members of New York Strike Force, for cooperating in a manner that revealed this cocaine trafficking network and is bringing appropriate justice to these three men.”

“One wouldn’t normally think Minnie Mouse gift wrap being associated with drugs, but in the case, that’s how these individuals allegedly chose to disguise the movement of cocaine,” said Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge of HSI New York. “Using children’s gift wrap was certainly no way to outsmart law enforcement and now these alleged drug pushers are no longer dealing in Brooklyn.”

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez said, “These defendants were allegedly involved in the trafficking of large amounts of cocaine on our streets in broad daylight. Thanks to the work of our law enforcement partners at Special Narcotics, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the New York State Police they are now facing the consequences of their alleged actions.”

<b>Indictment</b>	<b>Charges</b>
Christopher Kelly 3/19/1967 Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia – 1 ct
Salvatore Capece 11/1/1954 Effort, PA	CSCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia – 1 ct
Robert Woolridge 8/6/1980 Bronx, NY	CPCS 1 <sup>st</sup> – 1 ct CPCS 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 1 ct Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia – 2 cts

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.