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Sentencing in Major Drug Trafficking Case



MANUEL LUNA

ALBANY, NY - District Attorney P. David Soares announced today that **MANUEL LUNA**, 51, of Queens, was sentenced to 15 years in State Prison, to be followed by 5 years Post Release Supervision, and a fine of \$30,000, before the Honorable Richard Mott in Albany County Court this morning.

On September 30, 2016, LUNA was found guilty after a jury trial of (1) Count of Operating as a Major Trafficker, a Class A-I Felony, (1) Count of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, a Class A-I Felony, and (1) Count of Conspiracy in the Second Degree, a Class B Felony.

According to the trial evidence, including testimony of over 40 witnesses, and documents filed in the case:

An anonymous tip to law enforcement in July 2013 led to a traffic stop of a vehicle that was travelling northbound on the NYS Thruway in the Town of Bethlehem. A secret compartment “trap” inside of the vehicle contained approximately 1 kilogram of heroin laced with fentanyl packaged in a “brick.” As a result of this traffic stop, a long-term investigation began into uncovering a multi-jurisdiction narcotics trafficking operation spanning from the supplier in Mexico, to West Palm Beach, Florida, up through New York City in the boroughs of the Bronx and Brooklyn, up the NYS Thruway through Albany County, and ultimately ending in Buffalo, NY for sale and distribution of the drugs. The investigation was led by the Drug Enforcement Administration, and uncovered eight co-defendants that were ultimately charged in this multi-million dollar narcotics distribution ring.

Between April and JULY of 2013, MANUEL LUNA operated as a major drug trafficker by knowingly possessing very large quantities of uncut cocaine and heroin in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and the Town of Bethlehem, with the intent to sell them. The trafficked narcotics were valued at several million dollars. In addition, LUNA did conspire with co-defendants to possess, sell, and profit from large quantities of heroin and cocaine through this pipeline, including participating in a scheme to drive stolen cars that contained secret compartment “traps” or gas tanks full of narcotics and US Currency in the furtherance of the scheme.

DA Soares acknowledges the outstanding efforts of multiple law enforcement agencies for their cooperation and assistance in the investigation and prosecution of this trafficking ring. The Drug Enforcement Administration, specifically the DEA New York Division, DEA Buffalo Residence Office, and DEA West Palm Beach District Office, all deserve recognition and appreciation for their efforts leading this case. He also thanked cooperating law enforcement agencies from Florida, including the West Palm Beach Police Department, the Palm Beach Sherriff’s Office, and the Jupiter Police Department. DA Soares also acknowledges the contribution of New York law enforcement agencies that assisted on the case, including Bronx County District Attorney’s Office Detective Investigators, Amtrak Police Department, Port Authority Police Department, the New York City Police Department, the New York State Police Department, the Albany County Sherriff’s Office, the City of Buffalo Police Department, and the Chautauqua Police

Department.

DA Soares also cites and recognizes Drug Enforcement Administration New York Group D-35 for their unparalleled dedication to the investigation and prosecution of this case.

Former Assistant District Attorney Jasper Mills and Assistant District Attorney Megan Spillane of the Street Crimes Unit prosecuted this case.

For more information please contact Cecilia Walsh (518) 275-4710 or cecilia.walsh@albanycountyny.gov.

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