

Organization Attributes Sheet: USPS Drug Trafficking Group

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history <ul style="list-style-type: none">This particular USPS drug trafficking group is a small group that had members who worked for the United States Postal Service. The group shipped between Puerto Rico and the continental United States.¹The group was able to traffic large quantities of cocaine, heroin and marijuana through USPS from 2003-2010.²
B. Types of illegal activities engaged in, <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. In general<ul style="list-style-type: none">Trafficking³b. Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in<ul style="list-style-type: none">This group was responsible for trafficking over 50 tons of drugs through the United States Postal Service (USPS). The drugs trafficked were cocaine, marijuana and heroin.⁴
C. Scope and Size <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Estimated size of network and membership<ul style="list-style-type: none">The group is small with only 20 known members. All 20 were arrested.⁵b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area)<ul style="list-style-type: none">United States.⁶ In the continental United States, the group sent shipments to Texas, California and Puerto Rico.⁷Puerto Rico⁸
D. Leader Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Who is/are the leader(s)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not foundb. Leadership timeline<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not foundc. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found
E. Organizational Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not foundb. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?<ul style="list-style-type: none">7 of these individuals were Federal employees working for USPS.⁹c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information not found
F. Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Financial<ul style="list-style-type: none">The DEA suggests that conservative figures have the group shipping over \$150 million worth, or 100,000 pounds, of marijuana alone, between Puerto Rico and the United States. Information derived from several sources and searchable databases. All research conducted according to the project manual.

States during a 3 year period from 2007-2010. They began their shipping activities in 2003.¹⁰

- The group was paid based on the weight of the actual package, how much of the drugs were in the package, and the type of narcotic being shipped.¹¹ With the amount of drugs they were shipping with each package, they members were able to make a significant profit. For example, DEA estimates that the group was able to ship 20-25 pounds of marijuana per package.¹²

b. Human

- 7 of the members were federal employees. According to the DEA, these postal workers were abusing their position as mail carriers to facilitate the trafficking. This most likely means that these seven workers were individuals who had direct contact with the mail and were actually the individuals who shipped the mail.¹³

c. Logistical

i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.

- Information not found

ii. Key routes

- Information not found

d. Transportation

i. Land

- Information not found

ii. Sea

- Information not found

iii. Air

- There is no information on exactly how the shipments were sent from Puerto Rico to the United States. However, because it was the U.S. Postal Service and the packages appeared to be legitimate, they were most likely sent airmail.

iv. Intermodal container

- Information not found

G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities

a. Corruption

- Information not found

b. Concealment

- Members of the group who were mail carriers would meet with the clients and advise them of the best way to send their packages. They would then meet again in uniform to pick up the package. The uniform made their activities less conspicuous.¹⁴

c. Deception

- Five of the individuals who were arrested were charged with falsely assuming the role and duties of a United States Postal Service employee and then receiving benefits and normal pay without performing their duties.¹⁵

d. Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)

- They were probably able to get away with these shipments for two reasons. They were employees in charge of shipping mail - and shipments coming from Puerto Rico, because it is a U.S. territory, are treated less strenuously. Shipments from Puerto Rico do not have to go through customs.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

H. Prior / Existing Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group became aware of other groups using the postal service. The members informed those individuals that in order to ship narcotics through the mail, they would have to pay a fee. If those groups did not pay a fee they would steal the narcotics.¹⁶ b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement, political parties and other state entities, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found c. <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found
I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found
J. Technical Sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found
K. Penchant for Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found
L. Activities in United States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Trafficking • Conspiracy to Commit Drug Trafficking • Falsely assuming the role of a mail carrier b. <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found c. Linkages with US groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Market/transaction links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found ii. Stable supplier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found iii. Franchise arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found iv. HQ and Branch office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found
M. Evaluations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not found c. Additional insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While this particular group has been dismantled by authorities, this seems to be a lucrative and well used method of trafficking. There are more states that have said Puerto Rican traffickers are shipping narcotics through the mail.¹⁷
Other Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.
All research conducted according to the project manual.

¹ Santiago, SA Waldo. "News Release: DEA Investigation in Puerto Rico Identifies Postal Service Employees Engaged in Drug Trafficking". *United States Drug Enforcement Administration*. 29 September 2010.

<http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/states/newsrel/2010/carib092910.html>. Date Accessed: 23 May 2011.

² Rodríguez-Vélez, Rosa. "Press Release: Twenty Individuals Indicted for Participating in Drug Trafficking Conspiracy Using the U.S. Mail and Other Postal Violations". *United States Department of Justice*. 29 September 2010.

<http://www.atf.gov/press/releases/2010/09/092910-mia-twenty-indicted-on-drug-trafficking-via-usps.html>. Date Accessed: 23 May 2011.

³ Santiago

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Rodríguez-Vélez, Rosa.

⁸ Santiago

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Rodríguez-Vélez.

¹² Santiago

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Rodríguez-Vélez.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "Puerto Rico smugglers use US mail to ship cocaine". *Wall Street Journal*. 8 April 2011.

<http://www.connecticutcriminaldefenseattorneyblog.com/2011/04/connecticut-connects-to-puerto-rico-cocaine-by-us-mail.shtml/>. Date Accessed: 23 May 2011.