



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **THIRTEEN SEARCH WARRANTS EXECUTED IN NEW JERSEY ANTI-PIRACY ACT INVESTIGATION**

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PATERSON, NEW JERSEY: February 12, 2011

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that as a result of a three-month investigation Juan Becerra, Hernando Castro, and Jose Fernandez were arrested on February 12, 2011. The investigation was conducted by members of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, Narcotics/Gangs and Violent Crimes Task Force, with assistance from the following local police departments: Passaic, Paterson, Clifton, North Haledon, Haledon, Wayne, Ringwood, Pompton Lakes, Hawthorne, Montclair State University, and Fair Lawn. Additional assistance was provided by the Immigration Customs Enforcement, Recording Industry Association of America, and Movie Picture Industry Association of America.

Juan Becerra, Jr., age 41, of Fair Lawn, New Jersey, Hernando Castro, 55 age, of Paterson, New Jersey, and Jose Fernandez, age 35, of Paterson, New Jersey were in possession of a total of 22,760 pirated music CDs and movie DVDs. During the course of the investigation it was determined that the defendants were involved in the manufacturing and sale of pirated recordings of both movies and music CDs and DVDs. These pirated recording were ultimately placed in various retail establishments and offered for sale to the public. Many of the pirated DVDs movies were of feature films that were presently being shown in theatres only. The

investigation included a forensic analysis of the CDs and DVDs by an investigator from the Recording Industry Association of America, and Movie Picture Industry Association of America.

Search Warrants were executed at the following retail establishments: Joselyn Grocery, Cibao Meat II Supermarket, El Paisano Grocery, Falette Grocery, Cibao Grocery, all located within the City of Passaic; King's Grocery, Fernandez Food Market, and Fernandez Food Market # 2 Grocery, located within the City of Paterson. The execution of Search Warrants at the locations where the pirating operation was manufacturing the DVDs netted a total of 42 DVD burners, and \$7046 in U.S. Currency. The retail value of the pirated CDs and DVDs is \$185,645.

The New Jersey Anti-Piracy Act prohibits the manufacturing, sale, or offer to sell any sound recording or audiovisual work without the consent of the owner of the work. Any offense which involves at least 1,000 sound recordings or 65 audiovisual works shall be punishable by up to five years in New Jersey State Prison and a fine of up to \$250,000 may be imposed by the court.

It should be noted that the charges against Juan Becerra, Hernando Castro, and Jose Fernandez are merely allegations and that they are presumed innocent of the charges until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. For further information or questions please contact Chief Assistant Prosecutor Michael J. De Marco at 973-837-7656 or [mdmarco@passaiccountynj.org](mailto:mdmarco@passaiccountynj.org).