

# Chester County District Attorney's Office

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## NEWS RELEASE

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Mar. 17, 2022

### **WILMINGTON MAN CHARGED WITH \$520K WORTH OF DRUGS & GHOST GUN IN KENNETT SQUARE AND DELAWARE**

The DAO and Delaware State Police (DSP) announce the arrest of Wilmington resident Artemio Garcia-Laniz, 29, for possession with intent to deliver, illegal possession of firearms, dealing in proceeds of unlawful activities, and other offenses.

The allegations in the complaint are the following<sup>1</sup>:

On Mar. 10, 2022, in Kennett Square, after an arranged meeting with the defendant and a confidential informant for a drug purchase, Chester County Detectives (CCD) arrested the defendant for the possession of three kilos of cocaine, valued at \$300,000 and more than \$1,100 in cash found in his vehicle.

Later that day, DSP executed a search warrant at the defendant's home in Wilmington's 300-block of 4th Ave. They found 600 grams of heroin, 120 grams of crystal meth, 3.8 kilos of THC extract, two pounds of marijuana, \$8,228 in cash, and a black "ghost" handgun with no serial number or manufacture markings. The gun had a magazine inserted with four 9mm luger rounds of ammunition. Police also recovered an extended magazine containing 28 9mm luger rounds of ammunition and a box of Blazer 9mm Luger ammunition.

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<sup>1</sup> A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

In addition to the drugs, gun, ammunition, and cash, detectives found a digital scale and numerous plastic baggies used for packaging drugs at the defendant's home. The total value of the drugs recovered in Wilmington was \$145,000.

CCD later seized a 25-pound package containing marijuana, valued at \$75,000, in Penn Twp on Mar. 14. Charges against the defendant are pending in this case.

A total of \$520,000 in drugs were seized, along with over \$9,000 in cash and a ghost gun.

DA Deb Ryan said, "The defendant's intent on pushing this poison into our communities will not be tolerated. His criminal behavior shows he has no regard for human life or the devastating toll this has on our loved ones. We thank the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Drug Task Force, Pa. State Police, DSP, and Kennett Square Police for the teamwork it took to get this man off the streets. Everyone is safer today because of their efforts. My office will now hold him fully accountable for his actions."

Liberty Mid-Atlantic HIDTA Executive Director Jerry Daley said, "Investigations such as these demonstrate the reality that drug trafficking knows no borders, and cross-jurisdictional collaboration is essential to stem the flow of drugs into our region. The cooperative efforts across state lines by the CCD's HIDTA Drug Task Force, DSP, Pa. State Police, and Kennett Square Police represent how effective these partnerships can be. Liberty Mid-Atlantic HIDTA is proud to support its efforts. We congratulate all the agencies for their swift and coordinated actions that thwarted this poly-drug trafficker and offer thanks to DA Ryan for ensuring Garcia-Laniz will be held accountable."

DSP Lt. Robert Jones said, "This investigation exemplifies the shared public safety mission of the DSP and CCD regarding the arrest of Artemio Garcia-Alaniz. The DSP executed a search warrant at Garcia-Alaniz's residence after receiving information from CCD about a criminal investigation. DSP seized a semi-automatic ghost handgun with an extended magazine, 603.5 grams of heroin, 114 grams of methamphetamine, 5,725 grams of marijuana, and \$8,228 cash. The team of committed investigators has made our state and region safer today."

The defendant is held at Chester County Prison on \$100,000 bail set by MDJ Albert Iacocca. His preliminary hearing is set for Mar. 23, 2022.

CCD is investigating. DDA Michelle Thurstlic-O'Neill is the assigned prosecutor.

If you or anyone you know suffers from a substance use disorder, contact your local police department for help. The Law Enforcement Treatment Initiative (LETI) allows individuals in Chester County to contact a member of law enforcement to ask for a referral or to be connected to treatment with no threat of arrest or prosecution.

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Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney