

# Detectives of the Month

## September 2003

**Craig Capolino, Dennis Dragos, Raymond Ramos,  
Undercovers #1564, #1662, #4607, and the late Rodney Jay Andrews —  
OCCB / Brooklyn North Narcotics**

In July 2001, Detectives Craig Capolino and Dennis Dragos of Brooklyn North Narcotics began investigating rampant drug activity at the Cypress Hills Housing Development, targeting local gangs including the Back Crew, Front Crew, the EU Boys, the Fountain and Euclid Forever gang, and the Rough Riders. The detectives amassed information through confidential informant-inhabitants of Cypress Hills, as well as through subjects penned at Rikers Island.

At the same time, Det. Raymond Ramos, also of Brooklyn North Narcotics, was conducting an investigation of the "Little 'A' Team" drug gang that operated in and around Cypress Hills. Ramos and his colleagues, also using confidential informants, were conducting various buy and bust stings.

These narcotics operations were put on hold by the events and aftermath of September 11, 2001, but by November both gang investigations resumed, and by March of 2002 they were consolidated into an Organized Crime Control Bureau (OCCB) "Long Term Buy Operation." With a supervisor, 11 investigators, and four undercovers, the group was dubbed "the Brooklyn North 75th Precinct Narcotics Case Team," working exclusively on the "Good Neighbor Program" investigation of Cypress Hills. The team checked the resources of many other NYPD units, formed set books, executed computer checks, scrutinized crime reports, and posted a request with the New York City Housing Authority for the next "emergency use" apartment available at the complex.

On April 1, 2002, undercover detectives moved into apartment #5-E at 495 Fountain Avenue and immedi-

ately began scoping out and mingling with the local perps, making over 100 buys from 61 sellers at 28 different locations in the complex. Det. Capolino put on a uniform and masqueraded as a Housing Officer, his scooter equipped by TARU with a hidden video camera, documenting various gang members and the territory they controlled.

On May 29th, Det. Ramos utilized a similar tactic by responding to a homicide, and realizing the suspect was under narcotics investigation, targeted the perp for a buy and bust. The maneuver's success closed out the killing without jeopardizing the drug operation.

Recognizing an increasing need for data management, Det. Dragos initiated and developed database and spreadsheet indexes that were instrumental in tracking and disseminating case information, and continued in this role as case reporter.

The investigators began coordinating with four Kings County ADAs who were assigned exclusively to prosecute those snared in the take-down, which occurred mid-September 2002. During a four-day period, the five targeted drug gangs were apprehended. A temporary processing center was set up at Fort Hamilton Military Base to handle the large influx of tough-guy prisoners, who reportedly "cried like babies" at the sight of army personnel with machine guns. The operation netted 63 subjects, 24 search warrants, 27 arrest warrants, nine recovered firearms, and a large quantity of narcotics, resulting in 88 felony and 15 misdemeanor arrests.

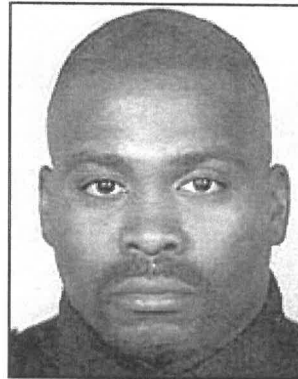
Detectives developed 12 confidential informants, leading to the closure of two homicides and two shootings. A King County District Attorney's press conference on October 10, 2002 announced the filing of 60 conspiracy charges out of a 212-count indictment.

While 35 defendants copped pleas, the rest opted to go to trial, which started in the fall of 2003.

For their roles in this complex and protracted narcotics investigation, which liberated the residents of the Cypress Hills Housing Development from the

oppression and violence of five ruthless gangs, we honor our Detectives of the Month: Craig Capolino, Dennis Dragos, Raymond Ramos, and Undercovers #1564, #1662, #4607, and the late Rodney Jay Andrews, who was murdered during an unrelated firearms investigation on March 10, 2003.

*In deference to the detectives still performing undercover, The Gold Shield chose not to run a group photo of our September Detectives of the Month. Pictured above is Det. Rodney Andrews.*



### **Police Reserve Association Scholarships**

The deadline for applications for the scholarship exam of the Police Reserve Association of the City of New York is February 24, 2004. The exam is open to sons and daughters of active or retired NYPD MOS and \$10,500 in awards will be granted. For more information, contact the Police Reserve Association at 37 West 32 Street, New York, NY 10001; or call (212) 564-0010. Visit [www.nycpra.org](http://www.nycpra.org) on line.