

Drugstore ring arrests

■ **11 nabbed in heists** that targeted pharmacies

■ **Two deadly LI robberies** spurred action

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Two deadly pharmacy robberies on Long Island in 2011 were the impetus for a federal and NYPD probe that yesterday nabbed 11 suspects in a sophisticated burglary ring targeting city drugstores, officials said.

Relying on complex analysis of cellphone records and old-fashioned surveillance techniques, FBI agents teamed up with NYPD detectives to break up the ring that was allegedly responsible for more than 125 burglaries and attempted burglaries in which millions of dollars in prescription medicines and hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash were taken.

The two Long Island robberies that sparked the investigation were the June 19, 2011, killing of four people by David Laf-

fer during a robbery at Haven Drugs in Medford, and the Dec. 31, 2011, friendly-fire killing of off-duty ATF agent John Capano during a holdup at Charlie's Family Pharmacy in Seaford, said NYPD Insp. Gregory Antonsen.

Focusing on pharmacy robberies, Antonsen said the special task force reviewed cases going back to 2009 and found incidents involving the same modus operandi in which suspects wore masks and neutralized alarms and surveillance cameras.

Often the crew of 13 thieves would cut holes in fences and leave ladders in the area days before the robberies, Antonsen said. The gang took large quantities of oxycodone, as well as Viagra and AIDS medications, he said.

Among those arrested were Guillermo Araujo, 24, of the

Bronx, who Antonsen said had been convicted earlier in a Bronx pharmacy robbery and was freed after serving 8 months of a 3-year sentence. Also charged was Edwin Araujo, 30, of New York City. Both were charged in an indictment in federal court in Manhattan with conspiracy to burglarize pharmacies and narcotics traffic conspiracy. Two other suspects, Andy Maccow, 29, and Christian Lora, 25, of New York, were at large as of late yesterday.

Police developed some evidence through DNA analysis of burglary tools and other items found at crime scenes, Antonsen said.

In the Seaford case, Capano was shot by a retired Nassau County police lieutenant while robbery suspect James McGoey was shot dead by an off-duty NYPD officer. Prosecutors declined to bring charges in those two deaths, ruling the use of force was justified. Laffer was sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to the four murders.