

Some charges dropped in cigarette smuggling case

By Joe Beck

WOODSTOCK – The prosecution dropped three cigarette-smuggling related offenses Friday against a New York City man, but Juan Pablo Encarnacion is still facing an imposing list of related charges.

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Louis Campola decided to drop a single charge of racketeering and two other counts of selling more than 3,000 packages of cigarettes against Encarnacion. The charges



Encarnacion

had been pending in Shenandoah County General District Court as products of an investigation which resulted in Encarnacion's indictment on 20 more counts in circuit court.

Campola did not appear in court and did not return a phone message asking for an explanation of why the charges in general district court were dropped.

Encarnacion, who is being held without bail in the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren Regional Jail,

appeared in court with his attorney, C. Todd Gilbert.

Judge Amy Tisinger told Encarnacion that his bail remained unchanged, despite the dismissal of the charges.

"Certainly, anything that would be holding you at this point is over in circuit court," Tisinger said, referring to the other charges against Encarnacion.

Encarnacion is the latest in a long list of defendants who have been prosecuted in U.S. District Court in Harrisonburg and Shenandoah County as a result of undercover investigations conducted by law enforcement officials with the Shenandoah County Sheriff's Office and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

The investigations have spanned the East Coast dating back to 2009 and involved transactions totaling tens of millions of dol-

lars between undercover law enforcement officials and suspected cigarette smugglers.

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