

《纽约市出现口罩黑市，N95口罩价格翻15倍》

A New York City pharmacist is under investigation for “ exploiting the present Covid-19 pandemic and engaging in price gouging, ” according to a search warrant application unsealed earlier this week in federal court.

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In early April, says the government filing, an informant contacted Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, with a tip that the retail pharmacist, Richard Schirripa, was selling personal protective equipment, or PPE, to New Yorkers at up to 15 times the regular price.

[illegible]

Some weeks earlier, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) had established anti-hoarding measures for various “scarce” materials during the coronavirus pandemic. The list included, among other things, medical-grade PPE such as N95 respirator masks meant for doctors, nurses, and first responders. Around the same time, the Department of Justice announced the formation of a task force that would combat hoarding and price gouging.

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Since then, New York City has become the pandemic's epicenter, with more than 6,000 coronavirus-related deaths to date. Healthcare workers in the city have struggled to source enough PPE, resorting to reusing disposable face masks and wearing garbage bags for protection. This past Friday, N95 manufacturer 3M filed a federal lawsuit against a New Jersey company it says tried to sell the masks for six times the usual amount.

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On April 4, 2020, an undercover HSI agent called Schirripa and asked about buying face masks. According to the warrant application, Schirripa told the “customer” he was selling surgical-grade N95 masks for \$22 each, and commercial-grade N95 masks for \$15. They both typically retail for less than \$1.50 apiece.

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“[W]hen you have something no one else has, it’s not a high price,” Schirripa explained, adding that his masks were expensive because “you can’t get them.”

Schirripa????“????????????????????”????????????????“????”?

