

# Physical and chemical concealment of cocaine

## Maritime Narcotrafficking



Ciudad de Guatemala, Noviembre 2022

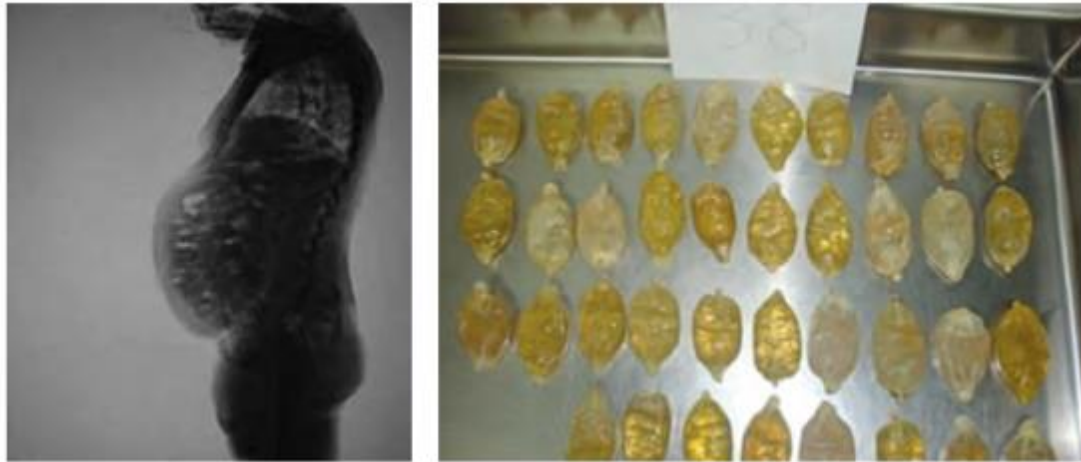
## Drug Trafficking Cases

Among the most common are: **physical camouflage** (suitcases with double bottoms, concealment), **chemical camouflage** and **container contamination**.



## Physical Camouflage: Ingested and introduced

Concealment mode by which a **person ingests or inserts finger protectors** through the oral, vaginal or rectal cavity, pharynx or esophagus.



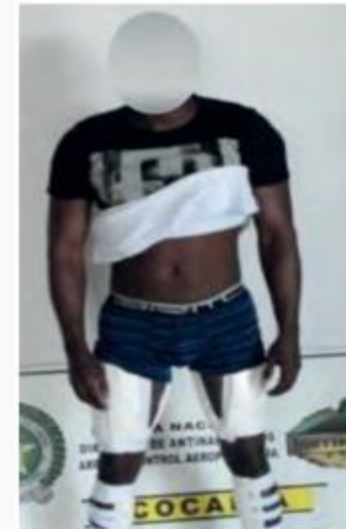
Concealment is also possible in breast or buttock implants.

The thimbles **are expelled by the physiological functions of the body**

## Physical concealment: Adhered

Concealment modality in which the substance is hidden in bundles or packages **and attached to the figure of the human body.**

Different mechanisms are used (pregnancies, prosthetics) **to avoid controls** and camouflage the drugs.

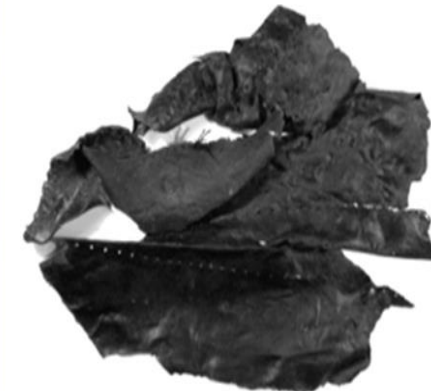
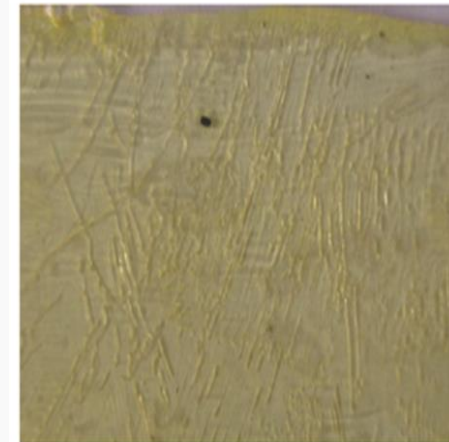






## Chemical concealment

- ❖ The drug reacts with one or more substances
- ❖ Color, odor and appearance are camouflaged
- ❖ There is chemical transformation
- ❖ PIPH is masked
- ❖ There is loss of alkaloid when recovering
- ❖ More expensive (safe) method
- ❖ Used for both small and large quantities
- ❖ Use of “Chemical locks”
- ❖ The more locks, the more loss
- ❖ Recovery takes place at final destination
- ❖ Generally, the “chemical” that hides it is the one that recovers it



## Chemical concealment: viscous liquids

- ❖ Cocaine is dissolved in acetone or other volatile solvent.
- ❖ The resulting substance is added to viscous liquid products, such as shampoos, conditioners, creams or gels, and mixed thoroughly.
- ❖ The product is packaged and sent to final destination.

### At final destination:

- The viscous liquid containing the cocaine is dissolved in acidulated water.
- Alkalize.
- Precipitate.
- Filter and dry.
- If necessary, perform conversion (mathematical or chemical).





## Chemical concealment: “Liquid Cocaine”

Technically it is COCAINE SOLUTION.

It can be dissolved in aqueous solutions or organic solvents (mainly alcohol).

It is extracted as cocaine base and is subsequently converted to hydrochloride.

It is the simplest method of chemical concealment.

Some consider it physical camouflage.



## Physical Camouflage: Impregnated clothing

Concealment modality where clothing **is impregnated with the drug.**

It is generally transported as merchandise in containers. Not all cargo is contaminated.

\* <https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/justicia/pantalones-con-cocaina-localizan-en-zona-13-otros-dos-cargamentos-con-prendas-provenientes-de-colombia/>



This is the second similar discovery in recent days, as on December 11, security forces intercepted a shipment with that type of garment.

On that occasion, security forces reported 600 pants, with a cocaine weight of 525 kilograms.

Source: Prensa Libre\*

## Drug Recovery Process



# Chemical Concealment: Black Cocaine

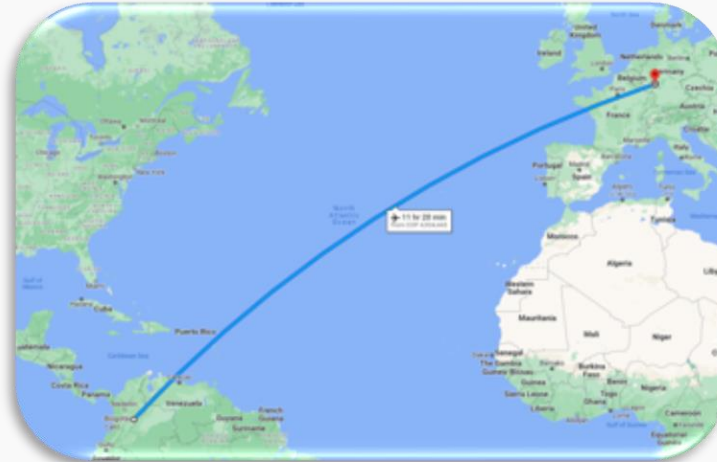
**DETENIDO QUÍMICO DE LA COCAÍNA NEGRA**

El cerebro de la cocaína negra fue retenido por efectivos del DAS y la Fiscalía Regional de Bogotá en una operación realizada el pasado jueves en Bucaramanga, informaron las autoridades.

Por: REDACCION EL TIEMPO 23 de mayo 1998 , 12:00 a. m.

Comentar Reportar Portada

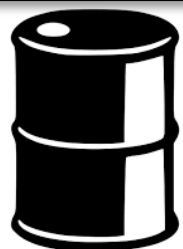
**L**uego de caer el primer cargamento del alcaloide invisible para los reactivos de las autoridades, se inició una intensa búsqueda de la red que llegó hasta Alemania, Africa y Colombia.



Pigments and dyes (for example, charcoal) are used to camouflage the drugs' typical appearance.

To interfere with PIPH, thiocyanates and iron or cobalt salts are used to form deep red complexes in solution.

To avoid drug-sniffing dogs, charcoal may be used to sufficiently absorb odor traces.



Pigment red

## Chemical Concealment: Asphaltite Case

The drug is dissolved in solvent (Methylene chloride) and mixed with asphaltite, then vegetable oil and activated carbon are added. The solution is heated and then allowed to cool.



It is necessary for the person who carried out the camouflage process to travel to the destination country to perform the precipitation of the drug.

Source: Colombia's prosecutors office

## Chemical camouflage: Use of polymers



Monomer A

Monomer B



- Polypropylene (PP)
- Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)
- Polystyrene (PS)
- Teflon (Polytetrafluoroethylene)
- Polyurethanes (TPU)
- Polyvinyl alcohol (PVA)
- Methacrylates

**40% of the cocaine is hidden within the polymer structure.**



## Case: Charcoal

55 kg of phenylacetic acid was concealed among charcoal from Ghana (the container had a padlock).



Fuente: CCP/LINODC



## Case: Ketone

1,770 l. Benzyl methyl ketone (BMK) + 5,016 l. Piperolino methyl ketone (PMK) in a container loaded with peaches from China: behind the screen load in a different packaging.



Fuente: CCP/LINODC

## Case: PMK or piperonyl methyl ketone

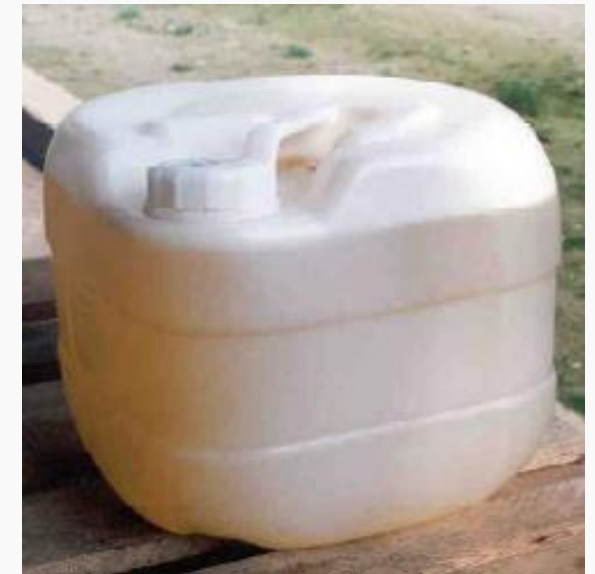
3,220 l. PMK in a container loaded with hot sauce from China: hidden in bottles.



Fuente: CCP/LINODC

## Case: Miscellaneous

4,000 l. of PMK piperonyl methyl ketone in a container loaded with tool boxes from China: behind the screen load.



Fuente: CCP/LINODC

## COMMENTS

- The percentage of cocaine is variable, depending on the total volume of the matrix.
- The person hiding the drugs is the same person in charge of recovering it at the destination.
- If the method of concealment is known in detail, it is easier for a chemist to recover the drug.
- Chemical-type camouflage predominantly involves concealing cocaine in base form.
- In the destination country, it must be extracted, purified, and converted into cocaine hydrochloride (crystallization laboratories).
- For precursors, chemical camouflage is not frequently documented.



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A decorative horizontal bar with four segments in white, light blue, dark blue, and green.

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**RECURSOS EN LÍNEA**

