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**96 INDIVIDUALS CHARGED IN MAJOR DRUG SWEEP**  
**FOLLOWING COURT-AUTHORIZED EAVESDROPPING AND UNDERCOVER**  
**INVESTIGATION AT FAR ROCKAWAY HOUSING COMPLEXES**

*Hundreds of Undercover Drug Buys Made Over Eight Month Period; Defendants include 29 Alleged Crips Members – including Reputed Leaders and Other High-Ranking Members of Violent Street Gang*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown and Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly today announced the indictment of forty individuals – including one of the reputed leaders of the Crips street gang based in Far Rockaway and a number of Crips gang members – and the filing of criminal charges against fifty-six others on drug-related charges as part of two large-scale undercover narcotics investigations at three Far Rockaway housing complexes: the Ocean Bay Houses, the Beach 41st Street Houses and the Ocean Village development. Eighty-one defendants have been arrested and fifteen are presently being sought.

The defendants – nearly half of whom are residents of the housing complexes – are charged with selling powdered and crack cocaine, heroin and marijuana to undercover police officers on hundreds of occasions over an eight-month period in and around the three Far Rockaway housing developments, as well as within drug-free school zones. At least one defendant is accused of using a child to deliver drugs to an undercover officer.

Queens District Attorney Brown said, “These arrests – and the seizure of drugs, guns and other contraband resulting from this investigation – should serve as a warning to both drug dealers and violent criminals alike that the law enforcement community – in spite of the diversion of significant resources to prevent terrorism and protect our City – will continue to aggressively track down those individuals who traffic in drugs and seek to put them in prison for long period of time. Not only were we able to arrest street dealers, but also the individuals who were allegedly running the operation. Many of the individuals are believed to be members of a violent street gang. These arrests will also take us a long way to improving the quality of the life of the residents of Far Rockaway and in reducing gang-related violence and other criminal activity.”

Commissioner Kelly said, “These arrests make the Rockaways safer by putting its drug dealers in jail. It represented great work by the Department’s Narcotics and Gang Divisions as well as the prosecutors. They combined forces to put a million dollar-a-year trade out of business.”

The investigation known as *Operation Sandstorm* began in February 2006 following complaints from residents of drug dealing and drug-related violence in and around the Ocean Bay Houses. In response, the NYPD’s Queens Narcotics Division and District Attorney Brown’s Narcotics Investigation Bureau dispatched numerous undercover officers to purchase crack and powdered cocaine, heroin and marijuana. They were joined by the NYPD’s Queens Gang Squad (QGS) which was simultaneously conducting a similar investigation known as *Operation Undertow*. During the course of the investigations, through a combination of investigative means – including court-authorized electronic surveillance and the use of undercover officers – members of the NYPD purchased narcotics on more than 200 separate occasions, seized approximately five kilograms of cocaine, several thousands dollars in cash, narcotics packaging material and four guns – including a loaded .45 semi-automatic handgun and a loaded tech-nine assault weapon.

Among those arrested was Jamel “Murder” Hamilton, one of the reputed leaders of the Crips street gang based in Far Rockaway. It is alleged that Hamilton’s workers – all fellow members of the Crips gang – obtained and distributed cocaine for the gang’s profit. Hamilton was charged with supplying narcotics to members of the gang and running a “stash house” at 409 Beach 51<sup>st</sup> Street, apartment 1G, where police executed a search warrant and recovered narcotics and packaging materials. On April 27, 2006, police

arrested one of Hamilton's workers, Christian Dent, allegedly in possession of over eight ounces of cocaine after Hamilton directed Dent to pick up the narcotics. In addition, in September 2006, Hamilton allegedly directed another worker, Kiseam Mathews, to pick up an additional eight ounces of cocaine from a supplier in the Bronx. Police arrested Mathews on September 6, 2006, allegedly in possession of the cocaine as he was on his way to deliver it to Hamilton. Hamilton is additionally charged with selling cocaine to an undercover officer on July 13, 2006 in the playground of P.S. 105, located on Beach 51<sup>st</sup> Street in Far Rockaway. It is estimated that the group grossed more than \$30,000 per week in their illegal operation. Members of the group allegedly sold and distributed narcotics to numerous street dealers who, in turn, sold the drugs to the group's customers.

Other alleged high-ranking members of the Crips arrested for selling cocaine to undercover police officers were reputed lieutenants True Womack and Bentley Martin. Specifically, Womack is charged with two separate sales of cocaine to an undercover police officer and Martin is charged with four separate sales.

The investigations also led to the apprehension of alleged Crips member Michael Pledger, 19, of 51-15 Alameda Avenue in Far Rockaway, who was arrested in May 2006 in Gwinnett County, Georgia, where he fled after allegedly fatally shooting 16-year-old Kadeem Smalls behind the Ocean Bay Houses in August 2005. Pledger, who is presently being held without bail, is being prosecuted by the Queens District Attorney's Office for the murder.

It is believed that the Crips were founded in west Los Angeles in the mid to late 1960s. Over the past several decades, the Crips have expanded their territory across the country. Today there are hundreds of local Crips groups, called "sets" – like the one allegedly ruled by Hamilton – operating throughout the City's five boroughs and neighboring counties. Individual gang members achieve status by the amount of money a particular member generates for his "set." Crips membership is multi-racial with no known age limitations.

The Ocean Bay Houses, located at 54-81 Alameda Avenue in Far Rockaway, and the Beach 41<sup>st</sup> Street - Beach Channel Drive Houses, located at 40-20 Beach Channel Drive, are part of the New York City Housing Authority's network of housing developments. The Ocean Bay Houses were completed in 1961 and consist of twenty-four buildings, 7- and 9-stories tall, in which 3,369 people reside in 1,394 apartments. The Beach 41<sup>st</sup> Street Houses were completed in 1973 and consist of four 13-story buildings in which 1,733 people reside in 712 apartments. Ocean Village, located at 57-17 Shore Front Parkway, is a private housing complex built in 1971 by the New York State Urban Development Corporation. The complex consists of 11 buildings that house 1,100 families.

The indicted defendants are variously charged in twenty-nine separate indictments with numerous counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree a Class A-II felony punishable by up to ten years in prison, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance In or Near School Grounds, both Class B felonies, each punishable by up to nine years in prison; and Criminal Sale of Marihuana in the Fourth Degree, Endangering the Welfare of a Child, and Petit Larceny, all Class A misdemeanors, each punishable by up to one year in jail. The other defendants have been arrested and variously charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, a Class A-I felony punishable by up to twenty years in prison, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree and Criminal Sale of Marihuana in the Fourth Degree.

The *Operation Sandstorm* investigation was conducted by detectives assigned to the New York City Police Department's Queens Narcotics Division under the command of Inspector Robert Napolitano, including Detectives Michael Monahan and Peter Maguire under the supervision of Sergeant Keith DeGiorgio, Lieutenant Brian Kelly and Captain Steven Zolga, under the overall supervision of Assistant Deputy Chief Edmund Hartnett, Executive Officer, Narcotics Division, and Chief Anthony Izzo, Commanding Officer, Organized Crime Control Bureau.

The *Operation Undertow* investigation was conducted by Lieutenant Anthony Cruz, Sergeant Andrew Puglisi and Police Officer Richard Zaccarese of the NYPD's Queens Gang Squad, under the command of Captain Kevin Catalina, and the overall supervision of Deputy Chief Thomas Galati, Commanding Officer, Gang Division.

The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Mary Lowenburg and Nicole Sharples, of the District Attorney's Narcotics Investigation Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Wilbert J. LeMelle, Bureau Chief, Karen J. Friedman, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Mark L. Katz, Supervisor, and the overall supervision of Executive District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

It should be noted that indictments and criminal complaints are merely accusations and that defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

## **ADDENDUM**

### **OPERATION SANDSTORM DEFENDANTS INDICTED AND ARRESTED (31)**

*(All are variously charged with second- and third-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance, criminal sale of a controlled substance in or near school grounds, fourth-degree criminal sale of marijuana, endangering the welfare of a child and petit larceny)*

1. KARL ALWOOD, 19, of 328 Beach 45<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
2. JABAR BARNES, 35, of 126 Beach 59<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
3. ANTHONY BOUIE, 30, of 146 Beach 59<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
4. WILLIAM BOYD, 22, 122 Beach 59<sup>th</sup> Street in Arverne, Queens.
5. JAMES BRUNSON, 41, of 335 Beach 45<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
6. LINDA BURDEN, 45, of 51-24 Broad Channel Drive in Far Rockaway, Queens - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
7. FRANKIE CRUZ, 17, of 186 Beach 26<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
8. JUAN CRUZ, 18, of 81-05 Hammels Boulevard in Far Rockaway, Queens.
9. JUSTIN FLAKE, 18, of 51-32 Broad Channel Drive in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Alleged Crips Member/Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
10. JAMEL "MURDER" HAMILTON, 24, of 125 Beach 17<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway - *Alleged Leader of Crips in Far Rockaway Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
11. MILAN HEGGS, 33, of 51-24 Broad Channel Drive in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone/Allegedly Used Minor Child To Deliver Drugs*
12. TYRONE HOWELL, 19, of (address unknown).
13. CHARLES JACKSON, 21, of 456 Beach 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
14. BABYLOVE JOHNSON, 18, of 456 Beach 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
15. SIRBASHCHIN JOHNSON, 17, of 456 Beach 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
16. JAMIR KING, 20, of 51-15 Almeda Avenue in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Alleged Crips Member/Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
17. ANNIE LYNCH, 45, of 315 Beach 39<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
18. WILLIAM MADISON, 21, of (address unknown).
19. KISEAM MATTHEWS, 19, of 807 Schenk Avenue, in Brooklyn, New York. - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
20. ANTHONY MORGAN, 22, of 51-32 Broad Channel Drive in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Alleged Crips Member*
21. EUGENE MORGAN, 48, of 54-75 Almeda Avenue in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
22. JIHAD OTTS, 30, of 115 Beach 56<sup>th</sup> Place in Far Rockaway, Queens.
23. RAYMOND PRIMUS, 17, of 487 Beach 44<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
24. NATHANIEL RAWLINGS, 20, of Beach 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
25. JAMES RIDDICK, 36, of 123 Beach 56<sup>th</sup> Place in Far Rockaway, Queens.
26. CHARLES THOMPSON, 36, of 413 Beach 45<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
27. DARYL THOMPSON, 50, of 50-05 Broad Channel Drive in Arverne, New York
28. ANTOINE WILLIAMS, 21, (address unknown) - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
29. KAJUAN WALKER, 18, of 453 Beach 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
30. TRUE WOMACK, 23, of 410 Beach 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens. - *Alleged Crips Lieutenant*
31. SHAWN YOUNG, 21, of 456 Beach 40<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.

### **OPERATION SANDSTORM DEFENDANTS ARRESTED - FELONY COMPLAINTS (7)**

*(All are variously charged with first-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance and third-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance)*

1. RODEY HAWKINS, of (address unknown)
2. MICHAEL MALONEY, of (address unknown)
3. BENTLEY MARTIN, 23, of 51-45 Almeda Avenue in Far Rockaway, Queens - *Alleged Crips Lieutenant*
4. ERIC MARTIN, 41, of 67-02 Almeda Avenue in Far Rockaway, Queens - *Allegedly Sold Drugs Within A Drug-Free School Zone*
5. NIGEL JAMES PEAN, of (address unknown)
6. CLARENCE SCOTT, of (address unknown)
7. RONALD SMITH, of (address unknown)

**OPERATION SANDSTORM DEFENDANTS ARRESTED - MISDEMEANOR COMPLAINTS (4)**

*(All charged with various counts of fourth-degree criminal sale of marijuana)*

1. DANIEL HALL, of (address unknown)
2. RAMEL JOHNSON, of (address unknown)
3. KAREEM MOLLOY, of (address unknown)
4. ALEXA SANCHEZ, of (address unknown)

**OPERATION UNDERTOW DEFENDANTS ARRESTED (31 of 39 defendants)**

*(all are variously charged with varying degree of criminal possession of a controlled substance and criminal sale of a controlled substance, second-degree criminal possession of a weapon, first-degree reckless endangerment and second-degree conspiracy. The defendant Pledger is charged with second-degree murder)*

1. LEO BAEZ, 21, of (address unknown)
2. RICKY BARNES, 28, of 71-15 Broad Channel Drive in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
3. JUSTIN BLAKE, 22, of 10 Amboy Street in Brooklyn, New York *Alleged Crips Associate*
4. JASON CARTER, 38, of 120 Beach 19<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway
5. JAMES DAVIS, 24, of (address unknown) *Alleged Crips Member*
6. JESSIE DAVIS, 23, of (address unknown) *Alleged Crips Member*
7. MELINDA DAVIS, 20, of (address unknown)
8. ROOSEVELT DAVIS, 25, of (address unknown) *Alleged Crips Member*
9. CHRISTIAN DENT, 22, of 51-15 Alameda Avenue in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
10. JOHNNY ELLIS, 23, of Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
11. YOLI FONTANEZ, 24, of (address unknown)
12. TIARRA GERALD, 18, of (address unknown)
13. JAMEL "MURDER" HAMILTON, 24, of 125 Beach 17<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Leader*
14. KAREEN HAMILTON, 25, of 441 Beach 51<sup>st</sup> Street in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Leader*
15. WILLIAM HANEY, 35, of 50 Townsend Avenue in Staten Island *Alleged Crips Associate*
16. HAMPTON JONES, 36, of 54-09 Alameda Avenue in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Associate*
17. JANISHA LIGONS, 19, of (address unknown)
18. WALTER LITTLE, 56, of Staten Island *Alleged Crips Associate \**
19. BENTLEY MARTIN, 23, of Brooklyn, New York *Alleged Crips Member*
20. CALVIN MASON, 22, of 264 Beach 13<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
21. JONCORI MASON, 24, of 288 Bay 38<sup>th</sup> Street in Brooklyn, New York *Alleged Crips Member*
22. KISEAM MATTHEWS, 19, OF 51-24 Broad Channel Drive in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
23. CARLTON MURRAY, 26 of 333 Bay 32<sup>nd</sup> Street in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
24. ANTOINE NANCE, 20, of 51-11 Alameda Avenue in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
25. MICHAEL PLEDGER, 20, of 51-15 Alameda Avenue in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
26. WAYNE POTTER, 38, of 437 Hidden Meadows Loop, Fern Park, Florida *Alleged Crips Associate*
27. TYQUAN SAMUEL, 19, of 364 Beach 56<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway *Alleged Crips Member*
28. CARL STACKHOUSE, 17, of 40 Lawrence Avenue in Lynbrook, New York *Alleged Crips Member*
29. KRISTOPHER THOMPSON, 22, of 1119-07 227<sup>th</sup> Street in Queens *Alleged Crips Member*
30. JERRY WALKER, 46, of 616 Hoffman Avenue in Trenton, New Jersey *Alleged Crips Associate*
31. TRUE WOMACK, 23, of 410 Beach 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Far Rockaway, Queens *Alleged Crips Member*
32. Information presently unavailable on Defendants 32 through 39.

\* Case is being prosecuted by Bronx District Attorney's Office

**Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org)**