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**THIRTY-THREE CHARGED IN CONTINUING HAMMEL HOUSES DRUG SWEEP
AND UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION AT ROCKAWAY HOUSING COMPLEX**

*18 Undercover Drug Buys Made Over Six-Month Period, Some Within 1,000 Feet of Schools;
Defendants Face Up To Nine Years in Prison*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, announced today the indictment of six individuals and the filing of criminal charges against 27 others on drug-related charges following a six-month undercover investigation at the Hammel Houses, a New York City Housing Authority complex in Far Rockaway, Queens. Thirty-two of the individuals have been arrested and one is being sought.

The defendants – who range in age from 17 to 61 and include three men who are alleged members of either the Bloods or the GIB (acronym for “Get It In Bricks”) gangs – are charged with selling crack and powdered cocaine, and marijuana to undercover police officers on 18 separate occasions over a six-month period in and around the Hammel Houses.

Queens District Attorney Brown said, “This initiative is yet another step in our continuing campaign to stop drug-dealing and drug-based violence in Far Rockaway. These arrests underscore our commitment to continue to work to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Hammel Houses. Last February we made dozens of arrests of drug dealers at the Hammel Houses. We pledged at that time to continue to fight for a drug-free housing complex and today’s arrests attest to that pledge. The result of this joint investigation should be a welcome relief to the many residents of the Hammel Houses, who have been plagued with illegal drug trafficking near their homes and schools.”

Commissioner Kelly said, “Police officers continue to put themselves at risk to make life safer for all New Yorkers, including those subjected to the dangers of drug trafficking in Hammel Houses. This has been a sustained effort. Law enforcement, police and prosecutors both, won’t go away. We will continue to attack drug trafficking and the violence it generates whenever and wherever it surfaces.”

District Attorney Brown added, “Those arrested are part of a loosely-knit group of independent drug dealers who descended on the Hammel Houses and who operated an open air drug market. Sadly, for many years, the residents of the Hammel Houses have been at the mercy of drug dealers who operated with impunity in the development’s courtyards – at times in full view of children. These brazen drug dealers mistakenly thought that they were operating under wraps. In fact, however, they were under investigation and marked for arrest and prosecution.”

The investigation began in July 2007 when detectives assigned to the NYPD’s Queens Narcotics Division received information regarding drug dealing and drug-related violence around the Hammel 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. During the course of the investigation, undercover officers purchased narcotics and marijuana on 18 separate occasions.

District Attorney Brown added that the alleged sales occurred near St. Rose of Lima School, located at 130 Beach 84th Street, a Catholic school with 339 students in grades pre-kindergarten to 8th. Also nearby the drug sale locations is the Hammel Child Care Center located at 82-10 Rockaway Beach Boulevard.

District Attorney Brown said that there were 11 shootings within the 100th Precinct in 2007. In comparison, there were nine shootings in 2006. Six of the 11 shootings occurred within the

Hammel Houses or in the immediate vicinity of the development.

The Hammel Houses are part of the New York City Housing Authority's network of housing developments and consist of fourteen buildings, six-and seven-stories tall, in which nearly 1,900 people reside in 712 apartments. The nearly fifteen-acre complex was completed in 1955 and is bordered on the east and west by Beach 81st and Beach 86th Streets and Hammel and Rockaway Beach Boulevards on the north and south. It is among the older public housing developments in New York City.

Under the City's Trespass Notice Program, which is part of Mayor Bloomberg's Operation Safe Housing initiative which went into effect in January 2005, non-resident suspects arrested for drug dealing on public housing grounds receive a notice informing them that they are banned from New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) property anywhere in the City and will be arrested if they return. If the suspected drug dealer is a resident of the development he will be targeted for eviction.

In addition to the arrests made today, officers executed 10 court-authorized search warrants and recovered various quantities of powdered and crack cocaine, marijuana, heroin, and .380 caliber ammunition.

The defendants are variously charged with numerous counts of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, a Class B felony punishable by up to nine years in prison; Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, a Class C felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison; Criminal Sale of Marijuana in the Fourth Degree, Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Seventh Degree, and Criminally Using Drug Paraphernalia, Class A misdemeanors punishable by up to one year in jail; and Unlawful Possession of Marijuana and Disorderly Conducts, violations punishable by a fine of up to \$100.

The investigation was conducted by Detective Joseph V. Dunne and Detective Joseph G. Callahan of the New York City Police Department's Queens Narcotics Division under the supervision of Sergeant Matthew Ficano, Lieutenant Paul Zapata and Captain Thomas Marren, under the command of Inspector Robert Napolitano, and under the overall supervision of Deputy Chief James O'Neill, Commanding Officer of the Narcotics Division, and Chief Anthony Izzo, Commanding Officer, Organized Crime Control Bureau.

The investigation was also conducted by Sergeant Brian Stamm of the New York City Police Department's Queens Intelligence Division under the command of Inspector Larry Nikunen, Lieutenant Jeffrey Miller and Captain Brian Coyne, and under the overall supervision of Chief Thomas Galati, Commanding Officer of the Intelligence Division.

Assistant District Attorney Julie S. Trivedi of the District Attorney Narcotics Investigation Bureau is prosecuting the case 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 Assistant 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.

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Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org

Defendant Addendum

INDICTMENTS

David Sweezer, 21, of 81-05 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Joseph Nerys, 54, of 360 Beach 85th Street

Donald Spellman, 17, of 81-10 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Lamont Davis, 43, of 81-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Stella Stokes, 43, of 82-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

CRIMINAL COURT COMPLAINTS

Chirstina Ciecwierz, 32, 82-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Jeanae Clifton, 23, 85-02 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Maria Cruz, 18, 81-05 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Sharifa Davis, 35, 84-14 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Nicole Debose, 29, 84-14- Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Martha Eastman, 34, 81-10 Rockaway Beach Boulevard

Joseph Favor, 23, 81-05 Rockaway Beach Boulevard (Alleged GIB member)

Ramona Hannah, 37, address unavailable

Carrie Hardwick, 30, 81-03 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Stanley Jackson, 53, 85-02 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Jennifer Jimenez, 25, 82-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Lamaine Johnson, 34, 81-10 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Burnell Lopez, 45, 85-02 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Guillermo Marteli, 47, 81-05 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Teotilo Ramos, 49, 82-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Dorothy Rembert, 61, address unavailable
Robert Rivera, 37, 82-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Manuel Rodriguez, 26, 81-03 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Aretha Rushing, 46, of 81-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Edwin Salgado, 51, 82-01 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Donald Spellman, 17, 81-10 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Wade Spurgeon, 30, 85-02 Rockaway Beach Boulevard (Alleged Blood member)
James Stephens, 29, 85-02 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Rahim Sutton, 32, 84-14 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Shakim Thompson, 19, 81-03 Rockaway Beach Boulevard
Monica Turner, 19, address unavailable
Omar Walker, 21, of 84-16 Rockaway Beach Boulevard (Alleged Blood/GIB member)
Anthony Wimms, 35, address unavailable

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