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D.A. BROWN: FIREWORKS CACHE RECOVERED IN MIDDLE VILLAGE
Two Defendants Arrested; Fireworks and Explosives With a Street Value of \$16,000 Seized

District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced the arrest of two Middle Village men and the seizure of illegal fireworks with an estimated street value of approximately \$16,000. The arrests are part of an ongoing investigation into the illegal sale and possession of fireworks and explosives in Queens County.

District Attorney Brown said, "Too many of our neighbors get injured or maimed each year from the improper use of fireworks. It should not be forgotten that these devices are explosives and, as such, are highly dangerous when improperly stored or moved. As these explosives were being stored in the middle of a residential neighborhood, they posed an immediate fire hazard and threat to the homes and residents of the area. Such explosives should be handled only by certified and trained professionals."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Patsy J. Colangelo, 28, and David Bonn, 28, both of 64-11 70th Street in Queens. The defendants, who are presently awaiting arraignment in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens, are charged with first-degree reckless endangerment and unlawfully dealing with fireworks and dangerous fireworks. The defendant Bonn is additionally charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance. If convicted, the defendants each face up to seven years in prison.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges, detectives assigned to the New York City Police Department's Organized Crime Investigations observed Colangelo unloading boxes marked "fireworks" from his 2007 black Nissan Murano to his residence on the morning of Wednesday, June 25, 2008. A court-authorized search warrant signed by Queens Criminal Court Judge Mary O'Donoghue was executed the same day and police recovered a large amount of fireworks and other explosives laying around the dining room and kitchen. Among the items seized were eleven bags of assorted fireworks, ledgers, invoices indicating that the defendants had purchased nearly \$15,000 in fireworks and thirteen price lists – listing prices from one dollar for "Spanish Crackers," \$250 for boxes of "A Whole Lot of Firepower Assorted" and \$420 for "Megaton Giant Cake – 168 Shell (Special Order)." Also allegedly recovered were two ziplock bags of cocaine from the top of Bonn's dresser and six Xanax pills from his keychain.

The District Attorney said that members of the NYPD Bomb Squad inspected the items, characterized them as class "C" explosives and safely removed them to the NYPD firearms range to be safely destroyed.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Lynn McCarthy, Robert Magrino and Kevin Hui, of the NYPD's Organized Crime Investigations, under the supervision of Sergeants Ken Chong and Greg Marotta, and under the overall supervision of Inspector Brian O'Neill and Chief of Detectives George F. Brown.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Neil F. Gitin, of the District Attorney Brown's Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Gregory Pavlides, Bureau Chief, and Christina Hanophy, Deputy Bureau Chief, 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 criminal charges are merely an accusation and that defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted at www.queensda.org.