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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**TWO MEN CAUGHT IN TRAFFIC STOP WITH TWO KILOS OF FENTANYL**

*Defendants Charged with Possessing Controlled Substance;  
Face Up to 20 Years in Prison if Convicted*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced today that Luis Navarro Gonzalez and Juan Esquer have been charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance and other crimes after they were pulled over during a traffic stop in Bayside, Queens and police found two kilos of fentanyl allegedly in the defendants' vehicle.

District Attorney Katz said, "Fentanyl has played a key role in the dramatic increase we've seen in fatal drug overdoses in Queens. It is a dangerous drug that must be kept off our streets."

Navarro Gonzalez, 26, of Bell Garden, Calif., and Esquer, 48, of Jalisco, Mexico, were arraigned Friday before Queens Criminal Court Judge Karen Gopee. The pair are charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first, fifth and seventh degree and a traffic violation. Judge Gopee ordered the two to return to Court on February 1, 2022. If convicted, Navarro Gonzalez and Esquer face up to 20 years in prison.

District Attorney Katz said, on Thursday, December 1st, defendant Navarro Gonzalez was observed driving a silver Ford Escape near Northern Boulevard and 204<sup>th</sup> Street in Queens. Defendant Esquer was seated in the front passenger seat. The driver allegedly made a right turn without signaling which resulted in a car stop by police.

Continuing, according to the charges, police executed a Court-authorized search warrant for the interior of the vehicle and recovered two kilos of fentanyl allegedly from inside the Ford Escape. The packages were enfolded in green saran wrap bricks and were hidden in the passenger's side air bag.

A police lab confirmed the substance recovered was the synthetic drug fentanyl.

The investigation was conducted by New York City Police Detective Bryan Zuccaro and other members of the United States Department of Justice Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Strike Force Initiative in connection with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration's Long Island Division Office.

Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Speck, of the DA's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Catherine Kane, Senior Deputy Chief, Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Chief, Hana Kim, Assistant Deputy Chief, Allison Wright, Supervisor, and David Chiang, Section Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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*Criminal complaints and indictments are accusations. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.*

**Note to Editors:** Archived press releases are available at [www.queensda.org](http://www.queensda.org).

