



718.286.6000  
WWW.QUEENSDA.ORG

QUEENS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568



MELINDA KATZ  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT:** PRESS OFFICE (718) 286-6315  
[QDACommunications@queensda.org](mailto:QDACommunications@queensda.org)

**MILLION-DOLLAR DRUG-AND GUN-TRAFFICKING RING TAKEN DOWN**

*Charges Based on Dozens of Undercover Buys of Cocaine, Ecstasy and Guns*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that an investigation in collaboration with the NYPD has led to drug and gun trafficking charges being filed against eight men and the seizure of narcotics with a street value of more than \$1 million. Three of the defendants are charged as major drug traffickers. The year-and-a-half-long investigation was sparked by violence and drug sales in and around Rufus King Park in Jamaica.

District Attorney Katz said: “We allege these men were significant drug and gun traffickers who were a grave threat to public safety as peddlers of death and addiction. We will hold accountable anyone threatening the safety of our neighborhoods. We are grateful to the brave undercover who worked with us on this case. I also want to thank the New York State Police and Nassau County Police for their help. My team and I look forward to prosecuting this case on behalf of the communities we serve.”

NYPD Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell said: “The NYPD’s fight against the trafficking of illegal guns and illicit narcotics in our city is at the forefront of our public-safety mission. The defendants in this case showed a callous disregard for human life, and we will never waver in our efforts to hold them – and anyone else who threatens the people we serve – fully accountable. I want to thank our NYPD investigators, the Office of the Queens District Attorney, the New York State Police, and the Nassau County Police Department for their work on this important case.”

Through a long-term wiretap investigation authorized by District Attorney Katz and supervised by members of her office, the police intercepted numerous communications in which the defendants openly discussed their illegal activities and were able to secure search warrants for the defendants’ residences at 85th Street in Brooklyn; 161st Street in Jamaica, Queens; and Acre Lane in Hicksville. Law enforcement seized the following from these locations:

- Two 9mm firearms
- One stolen 357 Magnum Revolver
- One 40 caliber firearm
- More than 3 pounds of cocaine
- More than 1 pound of fentanyl
- More than 1.5 pounds of psilocybin mushrooms
- 1,337 Adderall pills
- 797 Oxycodone pills (30 mg)

- 485 Xanax pills
- 334 Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine (MDMA) pills
- One car
- More than \$67,000 in cash

In addition to the drugs and guns recovered during the raids of residences in Queens, Brooklyn and Nassau County, undercover agents bought cocaine and ecstasy from at least one of the defendants on 40 occasions and purchased five handguns from at least one of the defendants over the course of the investigation conducted by District Attorney Katz's office and the NYPD's Queens South Violent Crime Squad.

The defendants:

**Adrian Escobar**, a.k.a. King Mango, 33, of 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, is the leader of the organization. In one indictment he is charged with operating as a major trafficker, 14 counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree, eight counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree, four counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree, 26 counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, conspiracy in the second degree, and conspiracy in the fourth degree. In a second indictment he is charged with criminal sale of a firearm in the second degree, five counts of criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree, four counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, three counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, grand larceny in the fourth degree, and conspiracy in the fourth degree. Additionally, he faces charges of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, aggravated criminal possession of a weapon, conspiracy in the second and fourth degrees, and other related charges in connection with items he possessed in his Hicksville home at the time of his arrest.

**Junior Escobar**, 20, of 161<sup>st</sup> in Jamaica, is charged in one indictment with conspiracy in the second degree, conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the fifth degree, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree, two counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree, 10 counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, seven counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree, unlawful fleeing a police officer in motor vehicle in the third degree. In a second indictment he is charged with conspiracy in the fourth degree and criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree. Additionally, he faces charges of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, criminal possession of a firearm, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition in connection with items recovered by the police from his residence at the time of his arrest.

**Jose Escobar**, 26 of Brook Ave. in the Bronx, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy in the second degree, conspiracy in the fourth degree, three counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the fifth degree, three counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree, five counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree, eight counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree and three counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree. He is also charged with criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, criminal possession of a firearm, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition in connection with items recovered by the police from 89-20 161<sup>st</sup> Street, Jamaica, Queens, at the time of his arrest.

**Jonathan Fernandez**, 31, of Baltic Street in Brooklyn, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree. He is also charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree, operating as a major trafficker, conspiracy in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of aggravated criminal possession of a weapon, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree and conspiracy in the fourth degree.

**Joseph Fernandez**, 33, of Bath Street in Brooklyn, was indicted on charges of conspiracy in the second degree, conspiracy in the fourth degree, two counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree and two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree. He is also charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree, operating as a major trafficker, conspiracy in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of aggravated criminal possession of a weapon, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree and conspiracy in the fourth degree, in connection with items recovered by the police from the 85<sup>th</sup> Street location in Kings County at the time of his arrest.

**Jonathan Suarez**, 33, of Acre Lane, Hicksville, is charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree, conspiracy in the second degree, three counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, three counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fifth degree, and conspiracy in the fourth degree, in connection with items recovered by the police from the Nassau county location at the time of his arrest.

**Juan Escobar**, 18, of 161<sup>st</sup> Street in Jamaica, is charged with criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, criminal possession of a firearm, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition in connection with items recovered by the police from his residence at the time of his arrest.

**Manuel Gomez**, 43, of 161<sup>st</sup> in Jamaica, is charged with criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, criminal possession of a firearm, two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition in connection with items recovered by the police from his residence at the time of his arrest.

Jose, Juan and Junior Escobar are brothers; Adrian Escobar is their cousin. Jonathon and Joseph Fernandez are brothers.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Michael Vila and Joseph Villalta of the NYPD Queens South Violent Crime Squad along with the assistance of undercover personnel under the supervision of Sergeant Matthew Lewis, Captain Charles Campisi and Deputy Chief Jerry O'Sullivan. District Attorney Katz thanked the New York State Police as well as the Nassau County Police Department for their assistance with this investigation.

Assistant District Attorneys Kieran J. Linehan, Supervisor, and Candice Smith, of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau's Major Narcotics Unit, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Catherine C. Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of the Investigations Division Gerard Brave.

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

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