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**APPROXIMATELY \$10 MILLION WORTH OF ILLEGAL CANNABIS PRODUCT SEIZED
FROM WAREHOUSE IN FLORAL PARK;
TWO DEFENDANTS ARRAIGNED ON DRUG CHARGES**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced the seizure of approximately four tons of illegal cannabis and cannabis product from a storage facility in Floral Park following the execution of a search warrant at the location on Tuesday, September 17, in partnership with the NYPD and the NYC Sheriff's Office. A smaller quantity of crystal meth and Psilocybin products were also found and seized from the premises during the raid. Two defendants were arrested and charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance for allegedly storing and producing the illegal product.

District Attorney Katz said: "The proliferation of illegal cannabis shops in our neighborhoods are supplied by large warehouse operations without any oversight or regulations in place. We are targeting these locations to prevent dangerous, unregulated and untaxed products from being sold in our communities. My office stands resolute in cracking down on the illegal production and sale of recreational drugs in our neighborhoods. Thank you to our partners at the NYPD and the NYC Sheriff's Office for their work on this case."

Awad Aziz, 31, and Muneer Kassim, 34, both of Brooklyn were arraigned late last night on charges of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the second, fourth and fifth degree and two counts of criminal possession of cannabis in the first degree.

Criminal Court Judge Edward Daniels ordered the defendants to return to court on November 12.

If convicted of the top count, they each face a potential maximum sentence of up to 10 years in prison.

According to the charges and investigation:

- Members of the NYPD, with assistance from the NYC Sheriff's Office, launched an investigation into the warehouse at the beginning of August.
- The Queens District Attorney's Office joined the investigation shortly thereafter and a search warrant was secured for the location at 88-08 Little Neck Parkway.
- On September 17, at approximately 6:00 p.m., law enforcement officials executed the warrant and found a large quantity of cannabis and cannabis products, as well as a smaller quantity of crystal meth and numerous products labeled as containing Psilocybin, known as magic mushrooms.
- In addition to the extensive storage area, officials observed a separate area where concentrated cannabis products were allegedly produced by pressing the vegetative cannabis to obtain the liquid extract, which would then be loaded into plastic cartridges.
- The total amount of illegal, unregulated product was loaded into two dump trucks, weighing approximately four tons, or 8,000 pounds.
- Both defendants were arrested near the premises at the time of the search.

The investigation was conducted by members of NYPD Queens South Narcotics, with assistance from the NYC Sheriff's Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kieran Linehan, Supervisor of the Major Narcotics Unit in the District Attorney’s Major Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Catherine C. Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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

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