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DRUG DEALING OPERATION DISMANTLED IN JACKSON HEIGHTS

Nine Defendants Indicted on Charges of Selling and Possessing Cocaine, Crack and Fentanyl

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced the indictment of nine individuals who were charged with selling and possessing controlled substances following a 17-month-long investigation into a drug peddling operation centered on 95th Street in Jackson Heights. Undercover investigators made 40 buys of cocaine, crack and fentanyl with a street value of more than \$12,000.

District Attorney Katz said: “Narcotics are wreaking havoc in our communities and with these arrests, we have broken up an alleged drug-dealing ring that was making life intolerable for the people of Jackson Heights. As alleged, these defendants sold deadly fentanyl along with cocaine and crack on or near a residential street in Jackson Heights. The transactions took place in plain view and, in one case, are alleged to have involved a child who accepted money for fentanyl to be provided to the undercover officer. I thank my Major Economic Crimes Bureau and the NYPD, especially the undercover officers, for their work on this case.”

Seven of the defendants -- Rodolfo Lopez, Kalexis Rosario, Angelo Fernandez, Luis Rodriguez, Hamza Aurandzeb, Justin Moncayo, and Dorian Romero -- were apprehended following the execution of court-authorized arrest warrants and arraigned on a 142-count indictment charging them with criminal sale of a controlled substance and criminal possession of a controlled substance. One defendant was additionally charged with use of a child to commit a controlled substance offense.

Queens Supreme Court Justice Karen Gopee ordered Lopez, Rosario, and Fernandez to return to court May 7. She ordered Rodriguez, Aurandzeb, Moncayo, and Romero to return to court May 5. (**See addendum**).

Two defendants remain at large.

DA Katz said that, according to the indictment and investigation, in August 2023 the Queens District Attorney’s Office along with the NYPD’s Queens North Narcotics Bureau began an investigation into drug dealing along a residential block of 95th Street in Jackson Heights.

Undercover officers conducted 40 controlled buys of fentanyl, cocaine and crack between August 3, 2023, and December 18, 2024. Most the purchases took place on 95th Street between 35th and 37th Avenues in Jackson Heights and many were done openly on the street.

In one instance, defendant Rodolfo Lopez allegedly told an undercover officer making a fentanyl buy to hand \$500 to a child, who appeared to be approximately 8 years old. The officer was instructed to retrieve the fentanyl he just purchased from Lopez from a bag placed on the mirror of a nearby parked car.

In another instance, Lopez allegedly left a plastic bag of narcotics on the windshield of a truck for the undercover officer to pick up.

In total, officers purchased 88.5 grams of fentanyl, 85.9 grams of cocaine and 4.5 grams of crack. The street value of the drugs totaled \$12,905.

Lopez and Fernandez were apprehended on April 1, Rosario was apprehended on April 8, Aurandzeb, Moncayo, and Romero were apprehended on April 9 and Rodriguez on April 11 by Queens North Narcotics.

The investigation was conducted by Detective John Michael Schramm.

Assistant District Attorney Jessica Coalter 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, Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Kieran Linehan, Section 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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ADDENDUM

Rodolfo Lopez, 28, of 37th Road in Corona, has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second and third degrees, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees and use of a child to commit a controlled substance offense. If convicted of the top count, Lopez faces a potential maximum sentence of 25 years to life in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 7.

Kalexis Rosario, 32, of 115th Street in South Richmond Hill, has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees. If convicted of the top count, Rosario faces a potential maximum sentence of 12 years in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 7.

Angelo Fernandez, 29, of 90th Road in Woodhaven, has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees. If convicted of the top count, Fernandez faces a potential maximum sentence of nine years in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 7.

Luis Rodriguez, 36, of Elbertson Street in Elmhurst, has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees. He faces a potential maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 5.

Hamza Aurandzeb, 26, of 95th Street in Jackson Heights, has been indicted has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees. If convicted of the top count, Aurandzeb faces a potential maximum sentence of nine years in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 5.

Justin Moncayo, 25, of 102nd Street in Corona, has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees. If convicted of the top count, Moncayo faces a potential maximum sentence of nine years in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 5.

Dorian Romero, 22, of 43rd Street in Astoria, has been indicted on charges of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third and seventh degrees. If convicted of the top count, Spears faces a potential maximum sentence of nine years in prison. He was ordered to return to court May 5.

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