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FOR THE DA'S WEEKLY EBLAST,
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A Message from District Attorney **MELINDA KATZ**

ARREST MADE IN MALBA STREET TAKEOVER

Our streets are shared spaces. They are not racetracks for people intent on causing mayhem.

This month, a Queens man was arrested on gang assault, riot and related charges for beating a Malba homeowner and his wife during an unlawful car meetup.

On November 23 a neighborhood resident heard a loud commotion at approximately 12:40 a.m. He saw numerous vehicles with spinning tires, which created smoke in front of his house.

The resident exited his home and told a large group of people near his lawn to leave the area. The man was punched, kicked and thrown to the ground and pummeled by at least six people, including the defendant.

The victim's wife, who had been standing beside her husband, attempted to push the attackers away from him when she was struck in the mouth.

The investigation into this incident is ongoing and my office will not allow illegal street takeovers of any neighborhood.

In Friendship,

STAY CONNECTED



THEFT RING INDICTED FOR STEALING OVER \$2.2 MILLION FROM HOME DEPOT IN SCHEME THAT TARGETED 128 STORES IN NINE STATES

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz and Gov. Kathy Hochul recently announced the largest organized theft prosecution in Queens County history. Thirteen defendants were charged in a 780-count indictment with stealing more than \$2.2 million worth of inventory from Home Depot stores in nine different states.

The defendants systematically and repeatedly stole merchandise from 128 Home Depot stores as part of 319 individual thefts. Some locations were hit up to four times in a single day. The group stole merchandise from stores as far away as Maryland and New Hampshire.

The accused were variously charged with grand larceny, conspiracy and other crimes for orchestrating the stolen goods and fencing ring that was based in Queens.

According to the indictment, members of the theft crew were allegedly directed by the ringleader to steal everything from building materials to tools, laundry detergent and paper towels. The most popular stolen goods included insulation kits, buckets of reflective roof coating, air conditioners, power tools and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. These pilfered items were then sold on the black market to retailers known as fences. Those buyers then sold the stolen merchandise to consumers.

The crew stole approximately \$1,800 to \$35,000 in merchandise a day.

The locations of Home Depots to be targeted were determined by a review of merchandise in each store as shown on the retailer's website and

app. The crew met daily at 5:30 a.m. in a Queens parking lot to prepare for the day's thefts.

The defendants used garbage bins to hide merchandise and remove it from the store. Often, it was the job of an accomplice to distract store workers while the thefts occurred. The alleged ringleader, who was on a conference call with the crew through their earbuds, provided directions on what to steal and how, and whether anyone was watching.

Once the theft crew had enough stolen merchandise, it was sold to the operation's five fences, located in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens.

"Working with our partners at the New York State Police, we brought this brazen operation to a halt," DA Katz said. "I thank Gov. Hochul for signing laws that provide prosecutors' offices with tools to more efficiently investigate and more effectively charge organized retail theft and



JACKSON HEIGHTS DRUG TRAFFICKING NETWORK DISMANTLED



DA Katz – along with the NYPD and Homeland Security Investigations New York – announced a major drug trafficking takedown in December in the Roosevelt Avenue corridor in Jackson Heights. This investigation shut down an open-air drug market that was operating around-the-clock.

Sixteen defendants were charged in a 47-count indictment with conspiracy and variously charged with criminal sale of a controlled substance and other crimes for allegedly selling cocaine, fentanyl, crystal meth, oxycodone and other illicit drugs.

“We are prioritizing issues on and near Roosevelt Avenue to ensure families and residents living nearby are protected from crime,” DA Katz said. “My office is committed to dismantling drug rings in Queens – block by block and street by street.”

A long-term investigation with undercover officers buying directly from defendants and electronic surveillance revealed that dealers brazenly exchanged cash for drugs in broad daylight. Most of the drug deals took place around 35th Avenue and 93rd Street.

The accused ringleader is alleged to have led the operation from Rikers Island – where he was incarcerated on another matter – through phone calls to his girlfriend, who was also charged in the indictment.

The investigation included the seizure of one 9 mm handgun, 30 grams of fentanyl, two kilos of cocaine, 16 grams of oxycodone, 30 grams of crystal meth, 160 grams of ecstasy and \$30,000 in cash.

Three of the defendants are charged as major traffickers and, if convicted, face a potential sentence of 15 years to life in prison.

CASES OF INTEREST

A Howard Beach resident pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the first degree in September for the broad daylight shooting of a tarot card reader. The defendant believed the victim had cast an evil spell on him and shot the woman in front of her Ozone Park home in May 2022.

Giuseppe Canzana was sentenced last month to 23 years in prison and five years post-release supervision.

In another case, a man who shoved his mother from a third-floor window was convicted after a jury trial of attempted murder, assault and other crimes. **George Tsintzelis**, 37, and his 64-year-old mother argued over money when Tsintzelis began to beat the victim with a cane and threatened her with two knives. The defendant held the blades against his mother’s body and forced her to a window ledge. He then pushed her out of the third-



story window.

The woman’s injuries included multiple broken bones, lacerations to her tongue, intestines and internal bleeding. She had to undergo numerous surgeries and was intubated at one point.

Tsintzelis faces up to 25 years in prison when sentenced this month.

HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE AND GIVEAWAY

Members of the Queens DA’s office donated more than 1,100 non-violent toys to help make the holiday season joyous for children. Bundles of action figures, balls, dolls and more were given to family shelters in Queens. Toys were also shared with Toys for Tots for distribution to local youngsters.



The office also hosted a giveaway with Assembly Member Larinda Hooks and Toys for Tots at PS 220Q in Forest Hills. Children aged 4 to 8 years old were given a toy for the holiday.

These events help strengthen the bonds of our communities by supporting families during a time that can be challenging for many.



SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS - BUILDING TRUST

Building trust in the community is an important part of law enforcement. DA Katz joined numerous neighborhood and civic groups for holiday celebrations including tree lightings and Hanukkah festivities.

At menorah lightings, DA Katz paid tribute to those who were murdered in a terrorist attack, which targeted Jews on the first night of Hannukah, in Sydney, Australia.

