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DA KATZ ANNOUNCES PADLOCKING OF FOUR ILLEGAL CANNABIS STOREFRONTS

Joint Enforcement Efforts with NYPD/NYC Sheriff Cannabis Task Force Resulted in Seizure of Over 200 Pounds of Illicit Cannabis Product, More Than 300 Pounds of Illegal Tobacco and Seven Arrests

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced the third phase of a sweeping enforcement action against illegal cannabis storefronts in the borough. Dubbed Operation Weed Whacker, the months-long investigation included undercover buys and resulted in the padlocking of four locations, seven arrests and the seizure of hundreds of pounds of illicit cannabis and tobacco products. Two of the locations were found to have intricate traps to hide the contraband with one location storing the product behind a false TV and another using a fake electrical panel as an entryway to a storage room.

District Attorney Katz said: “Unregulated cannabis stores sell products that pose a great danger to the surrounding community, and the store owners are now trying to escape accountability by hiding the contraband using trapdoors. Many of these items are designed to mimic popular brand-name candies, deliberately enticing young people. My office, working closely with our law enforcement partners, will continue to shut down these operations so that residents are protected and legitimate operations can thrive. I thank the members of my Crime Strategies and Intelligence Bureau, Detective Bureau, and our partners at the New York City Sheriff’s Office and the NYPD for their continued work on this operation.”

DA Katz said that a series of coordinated enforcement operations were recently carried out between November 24, 2025, and January 16, 2026, at five locations in Queens. The locations that were searched and padlocked are:

- Love Story at 241-20 South Conduit Avenue in Rosedale
- Cloud Corner at 47-03 Francis Lewis Boulevard in Auburndale
- Oakland Smoke Shop at 215-09 73rd Avenue in Oakland Gardens
- 18506 Convenience & Smoke Shop at 185-06 Horace Harding Expressway in Fresh Meadows

The Deli & Grocery Store Inn Linne at 184-19 140th Street in Rochdale was issued a summons.

Seven defendants from the five locations were arrested and charged with varying crimes related to criminal possession of cannabis.

A total of 100 pounds of cannabis flower, 56 pounds of cannabis vapes, 68 pounds of cannabis edibles, 204 pounds of illegal flavored tobacco vapes and 149 pounds of other tobacco products were seized from the five locations.

This operation is part of the District Attorney’s ongoing effort to rid Queens of illegal cannabis dispensaries, whether operating out of trucks and vans or brick-and-mortar commercial locations.

Since November 2022, enforcement operations have resulted in the prosecution of 457 individuals for felony-related charges related to the sale and/or possession of cannabis or controlled substances in Queens.

A total of 335 shops in Queens County have been padlocked since May 2024 through the assistance of the New York City Sheriff’s Office, the NYPD and the New York State Police Troop NYC – Queens Bureau of Criminal Investigation.

The case investigation was conducted by Assistant District Attorney Attaul Haq, under the supervision of Brandi Kligman, Assistant Deputy Bureau Chief and Shanon LaCorte, Bureau Chief of DA Katz’s Crime Strategies and Intelligence Bureau, with assistance from Supervising Intelligence Analyst Victoria Filipe and Senior Intelligence Analyst Hong Man Lam, as well as Detective Investigator Arthur Bryant and other members of DA Katz’s Detective Bureau under the supervision of Lieutenant Joseph Oliver and Sergeant David Moore, and under the overall supervision of the Chief Investigator of the Detective Bureau Robert LaPollo. This operation was conducted with the assistance of the members of the NYPD assigned to the 107th, 111th and 116th precincts; as well as the members of the New York State Police Troop NYC – Queens Bureau of Criminal Investigation, under the overall supervision of Senior Investigator Vincent Delango, Lieutenant Alexander Engram, Captain Michael Moran and Major Trenee Young.

Assistant District Attorney Kieran Linehan, Section Chief of the Major Narcotics Unit in the Major Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the cases under the supervision of Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for the Investigations Division Joseph T. Conley III.

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

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