



MELINDA KATZ DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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JUNE 2026



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A Message from District Attorney

MELINDA KATZ

UPGRADED CHARGES FOR ARSONS

We recently secured upgraded indictment charges against two individuals for setting separate fires in Queens.

A 38-year-old Maspeth resident now faces first-degree murder charges for using matches from a nearby gas station to allegedly start a fire at a Flushing residential building. Four people were killed in that blaze, including a 3-year-old child.

Three people succumbed to smoke inhalation and a fourth victim jumped from the building to escape and later died. Seven other people were also injured including two firefighters.

If convicted, the defendant faces life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In the second case, a Chicago woman was indicted on upgraded charges of first-degree arson for allegedly setting a fire that destroyed a Maspeth restaurant and the apartments above it, injuring two occupants. The defendant is also accused of setting fire to an American flag, as well as damaging a storefront and the Maspeth Jewish Center.

The defendants will be held accountable for these horrific crimes.

In Friendship,

GUNS COLLECTED AT BUYBACK EVENT

Removing illegal weapons off the streets of Queens is a priority for District Attorney Melinda Katz. She recently hosted her 13th gun buyback event at the Southern Baptist Church in East Elmhurst where 108 firearms were collected.

“These are weapons that will never be used to kill or injure,” DA Katz said. “Each firearm removed from our streets represents a step toward safer neighborhoods and fewer opportunities for violence.”

Working with co-sponsors, the NYPD and the Office of New York Attorney General Letitia James, participants were given the opportunity to drop off a working firearm in exchange for a bank card preloaded with cash. The event was completely anonymous, with no identification required and no questions asked.

This single event resulted in the removal of

53 pistols, 31 revolvers, six assault weapons, six rifles, four derringers, three shotguns, one ghost gun and four other types of guns.

This was the second event in a row that resulted in the collection of more than 100 firearms.

Since the start of DA Katz’s gun buyback program in 2020, these 13 events have resulted in the removal of 849 firearms.

“Gun buyback initiatives remain an important strategy in our efforts to reduce gun violence and strengthen public safety across our communities,” DA Katz said. “I’m grateful to our partners and to the residents who participated in another successful program.”

DA Katz also thanked Pastor Michael V. Johnson for opening the doors of his church for this buyback event.



CANNABIS SEIZURE



The DA's office recently seized approximately 1,000 pounds of illicit cannabis products and closed a dispensary on Bell Boulevard. This shop — in the heart of Bayside's central shopping corridor — was not licensed to sell marijuana.

"The sheer volume of unregulated marijuana confiscated from the shop, as well as a second-floor apartment, is deeply alarming, particularly because Bell Boulevard is a well-known gathering area for families and teenagers," DA Katz said.

After hearing from concerned community members, the DA's office investigated the location as part of its ongoing enforcement efforts with the NYPD/NYC Sheriff Cannabis Task Force.

The operation recovered more than 526 pounds of cannabis flower, 417 pounds of THC vapes, 284 pounds of cannabis edibles, 17 pounds of THC concentrate, 1,635 pounds of flavored tobacco vapes and 101 pounds of other tobacco products from the establishment and apartment at 40-13 Bell Boulevard.

The total estimated value of the recovered items was \$10 million. Two people were also arrested on site.

Since November 2022, the DA's enforcement operations have resulted in the prosecution of 475 individuals charged with felony-related crimes, including illegal sale and/or possession of cannabis or controlled substances.

A total of 352 shops in Queens County have been padlocked since May 2024 with the assistance of the NYC Sheriff's Office, the NYPD and the New York State Police Troop NYC – Queens Bureau of Criminal Investigation.



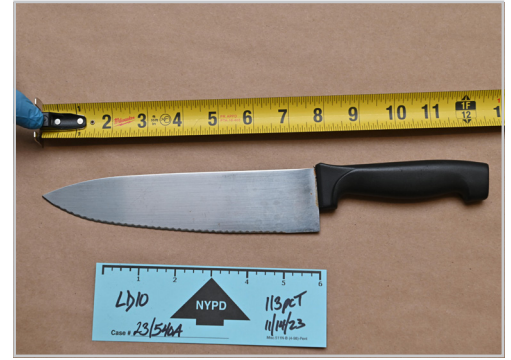
CASES OF INTEREST

A jury found **David Daniel** guilty of three counts of murder in the first degree for the November 2023 stabbing deaths of his girlfriend and two other people who were tenants in his St. Albans home.

The defendant, 56, became enraged about back rent and believed that his girlfriend was about to break up with him. At sentencing, Daniel faces up to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In a separate case, an Elmhurst man was convicted of murder in the second degree, assault in the first degree and other crimes for a two-week stabbing spree that killed one and injured three others.

Without provocation in April 2021, **Mark Albano**, 39, approached a man on platform at the Grand Avenue-Newton subway station and



stabbed him in the chest. The victim died. In the following days, the defendant attacked three others with a knife in separate incidents in Astoria and Elmhurst. At sentencing, the defendant faces up to 100 years to life in prison.

ILLEGAL SCOOTER ENFORCEMENT CONTINUES

The DA's office is committed to removing illegal and unregistered scooters from our neighborhood streets. Members of the DA's office, in conjunction with the NYPD's 103rd Precinct and Patrol Borough Queens South in Jamaica, recently confiscated 28 scooters.

During the operation one person was arrested for driving with a suspended license, 11 moving summonses were issued and 27 parking tickets were written. Since the start of this initiative, the DA's office has seized 1,428 scooters.



WE REMEMBER ON MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is an opportunity for our entire nation to reflect on the true heroes of America – those who sacrificed and served to ensure the freedoms we enjoy.

DA Katz gathered at Elmhurst Park for the office's annual Memorial Day Observance. During the event, the DA honored Seymour Schwartz, a World War II Army and Navy veteran; Michael Daughtry, a Vietnam War Army veteran; and Corporal Emmitt Henry, a Marine who served during the Sharp Edge, Desert Storm and Provide Comfort operations.

The ceremony included the placement of a wreath to remember those no longer with us.

