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SOUTH JAMAICA MAN INDICTED FOR SELLING DRUGS, GUNS

Defendant Allegedly Peddled Cocaine and Firearms to Undercover Officer; Faces up to 30 Years in Prison, if Convicted

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that Mark Lawrence was indicted for criminal sale of a controlled substance, criminal sale of a firearm, criminal possession of a firearm and other crimes for allegedly selling guns, including an assault weapon and cocaine, to an undercover officer. The sales took place near a shopping mall and his home in South Jamaica between December 2025 and October 2026.

District Attorney Katz said: "This defendant is accused of brazenly selling cocaine and firearms for nearly a year with no regard for the public's safety. All five of the guns were loaded, with four of the five guns containing high-capacity magazines. One was an assault weapon. I will not allow the streets of Queens to become open air markets for drugs and guns. The defendant has been apprehended, and our borough is safer thanks to the work of the brave undercover officer who made these purchases."

Lawrence, 51, of South Jamaica, was arraigned Tuesday before Supreme Court Justice Toni Cimino on a 32-count grand jury indictment charging him with eight counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree, six counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree, two counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree, three counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal sale of a firearm in the second degree, five counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, and five counts of criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree.

Justice Cimino remanded Lawrence and ordered him to return to court December 15. The defendant faces up to 30 years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Katz said that, according to the indictment and investigation, in December 2025, members of the Queens South Major Case Narcotics team began investigating Lawrence for narcotics trafficking.

Between December 10, 2025, through October 21, 2026, an undercover officer conducted 19 controlled buys with Lawrence and purchased approximately a kilogram of cocaine in total as well as five loaded firearms, four of which had high-capacity magazines from the defendant. One of the firearms was an assault weapon.

All of the transactions occurred within the 113th Precinct, including some in the vicinity of the Rochdale Village Shopping Mall and in front of or inside the defendant's home.

The investigation was conducted by members of the District Attorney's Strategic Investigations Bureau, along with Detective Philip Giardina, Lieutenant Thomas Sorrentino, and Captain Kerion Mathison of NYPD Queens South Major Case Narcotics, under the overall supervision of Inspector Miguel Iglesias, NYPD Narcotics Division.

Assistant District Attorney Candice Smith of the District Attorney's Strategic Investigations Bureau is prosecuting the case with assistance from Assistant District Attorney Kieran Linehan, Section Chief of the Major Narcotics Unit, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Tara Digregorio, Bureau Chief, Rachel Stein, Deputy Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney of Investigations Joseph T. Conley III.

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

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