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**DEFENDANTS INDICTED BY QUEENS GRAND JURY FOR OPERATING
OPEN-AIR DRUG MARKET**

Defendants Allegedly Sold Fentanyl, Heroin and Cocaine from Dead-End Street in Jamaica, Queens; More Than Ten Kilos of Narcotics, Four Guns Confiscated at Time of Arrests

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, joined by New York City Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, announced today that two defendants were indicted by a Queens County grand jury. The defendants are variously charged with conspiracy and criminal sale of a controlled substance for allegedly packaging and selling an assortment of narcotics to walk up customers- including heroin, cocaine and fentanyl- from an open-air drug market on a dead-end Jamaica street on multiple occasions between May 2021 and June 2022. Lonnie Scott is charged with possession of kilos of narcotics worth more than \$75,000.

District Attorney Katz said, “Illicit drugs – especially dangerous substances such as fentanyl – poison our communities and place the lives of countless individuals at risk. While Queens County continues to struggle with an alarming increase in fatal drug overdoses since the pandemic began, my Office is relentless in our efforts to take down those who sell poison on our streets. Following a long-term investigation conducted jointly by my Major Economic Crimes Bureau and the New York City Police Department, the defendants face serious charges and will be held to account for their alleged actions in jeopardizing the safety of our neighborhoods.”

Police Commissioner Sewell said, “As this case demonstrates, the NYPD and our law-enforcement partners will continue to combat the scourge of illegal drugs wherever, and whenever, it threatens New Yorkers. Selling this poison in our community shows a callous disregard for human life. These criminals prey on some of our city’s most vulnerable people, and the NYPD will never cease in our efforts to bring them to justice. I want to thank the Office of the Queens District Attorney, along with all of our investigators, for their outstanding work on this case.”

The District Attorney’s Office identified Esau Daniels of Jamaica, Queens. The defendants have variously been charged with conspiracy, criminal sale of a controlled substance, and criminal possession of a controlled substance.

Lonnie Scott, 50, was subject to a search warrant at his Jamaica, Queens residence which yielded more than five kilograms of cocaine and heroin. **(See Addendum for further details on all defendants).**

Utilizing complex court-authorized electronic surveillance warrants, surveillance, and other investigative tools, the Queens District Attorney’s Major Economic Crimes Bureau, working with the New York City Police Department’s Queens South Violent Crime Squad, conducted a thirteen-month investigation dubbed Operation

Overpass. In October 2021, the Court authorized electronic surveillance in connection to an alleged scheme to sell narcotics in a Queens neighborhood near 157th Street and 109th Avenue through an allegedly open market, a dead-end street where customers could walk up and purchase illicit narcotics on demand. In utilizing the eavesdropping warrant, the detectives learned that Lonnie Scott was allegedly a supplier of narcotics.

According to the charges, from May 2021 to June 2022, defendant Esau Daniels conspired to sell an inventory of drugs including heroin, cocaine and fentanyl on at least 23 occasions.

DA Katz said, as alleged, Esau Daniels would obtain narcotics from various suppliers, including Lonnie Scott that he then repackaged for resale. Daniels provided the narcotics to several street dealers. Defendant Daniels allegedly communicated information about his drug inventory and sales through scores of phone calls and text messages intercepted during the course of the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by New York City Police Department's Queens South Violent Crime Squad, with lead Detective Brian Ritto, under the supervision of Sergeant Brendan Meehan, Lieutenant Eric Sonnenberg, Captain Robert Dandrea, Deputy Inspector Joseph Matzinger, and Deputy Chief Jerry OSullivan.

Supervising Assistant District Attorney Lissa L. Yang, of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, is prosecuting the case, under the supervision of Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, Catherine Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau, and Kieran Linehan, Supervisor, Major Narcotics Unit of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau under the overall supervision of Gerard Brave, Executive Assistant District Attorney in charge of Investigations.

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

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Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

ADDENDUM

ESAU DANIELS, 28, of 159th Street in Jamaica, Queens was arraigned July 13, 2022 before Queens Supreme Court Justice Donna-Marie Golia charged with criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree and conspiracy in the fourth degree. Justice Golia ordered the defendant to return to Court on August 1, 2022. If convicted, Daniels faces up to fourteen years in prison. The defendant is being represented by Scott Bookstein.

LONNIE SCOTT, 50, of 143rd Street in Jamaica, Queens, was arraigned July 13, 2022 before Queens Criminal Court Judge Marty Lentz on a complaint charging him with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree and operating as a major trafficker. Judge Lentz ordered the defendant to return to court on July 18, 2022. If convicted, Scott faces up to up to life years in prison. The defendant is being represented by Edwin Schulman.

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