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FIVE INDICTED ON GUN AND DRUG CHARGES
FOLLOWING LONG-TERM INVESTIGATION

*Sold Firearms and Narcotics to Undercover Officer in Far Rockaway
Four Additional Defendants Arrested Following Execution of Search Warrants*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that five defendants were indicted on charges of conspiracy and criminal sale of drugs and guns following a six-month investigation into a trafficking operation in Far Rockaway. The investigation included a series of undercover drug buys and tracking of defendants' phones, resulting in the seizure of 10 firearms, including ghost guns, and a kilogram of cocaine.

An additional four defendants are being prosecuted on weapons and drug paraphernalia charges in connection with this operation following the execution of search warrants.

District Attorney Katz said: "Long and complex investigations are essential to getting guns and drugs off our streets. The resulting seizures and prosecutions are one of the most important reasons why we are seeing significant declines in major crimes. We will not back down from the hard work or the fight. Thanks to our partnership with the NYPD, whose officers put themselves in harm's way, the drugs and guns seized as part of this investigation will not be used to harm anyone."

NYPD Commissioner Edward A. Caban said: "The charges stemming from our methodical investigation demonstrate the NYPD's unwavering commitment to investigating and arresting anyone who dares to peddle illegal drugs and guns on the streets of New York City. Disrupting and dismantling alleged criminal networks such as this is key to our overall public safety mission, and we thank our colleagues in the office of the Queens district attorney for their continued partnership."

Three of the indicted defendants were arraigned on a 55-count indictment yesterday before Supreme Court Justice Ira Margulis, who ordered them to return to court on February 8. The rest of the defendants are awaiting arraignment.

According to the charges:

- In August 2023, a joint investigation by the Queens District Attorney's office and the NYPD's Gun Violence Suppression Division was launched into the sale of firearms and narcotics in the Far Rockaway area.
- A total of 16 buys of cocaine and guns took place among an undercover police officer and five of the defendants resulting in the seizure of drugs with a street value of \$50,000.
- One of the defendants was seen on surveillance video selling drugs in the lobby of the Gateway Apartments housing complex located at 1502 Mott Avenue.

On January 17, law enforcement officials executed search warrants at three residences in Far Rockaway, arrested the five indicted defendants and four additional defendants (**See Addendum**), and seized the following:

- Loaded 40-caliber firearm
- Loaded 9 mm Taurus
- Loaded, defaced Glock 19 with a high-capacity magazine

The investigation was conducted by Detective James Miles of the New York City Police Department's Gun Violence Suppression Division, with the assistance of Deputy Inspector Craig Edelman, Sergeant Donmartin Atienza, and Detective Kelly Murphy, under the supervision of Assistant Chief Jason Savino.

Assistant District Attorney Candice Smith of the District Attorney's Major Economic Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Catherine C. Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, Ajay Chheda, Section Chief, and Kieran Linehan, Supervisor, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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

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ADDENDUM

Jermaine Wilkinson-Morgan, 19, of Far Rockaway, was arraigned on a 55-count indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second and third degrees, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal sale of a firearm in the second degree, two counts of criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree and two counts of criminal sale of a ghost gun in the second degree. Wilkinson-Morgan is additionally charged in a criminal complaint with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a firearm, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition. If convicted, Wilkinson-Morgan faces up to 10 years in prison.

Nashawn Wilson, 22, of Far Rockaway, was arraigned on a 55-count indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree and third degrees, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree and criminal sale of a ghost gun in the second degree. Wilson is additionally charged in a criminal complaint with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a firearm, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition. If convicted, Wilson faces up to 20 years in prison.

Carlos Menendez, 42, of Far Rockaway, was arraigned on a 55-count indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first and third degrees and criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree. If convicted, Menendez faces up to 20 years in prison.

Christopher Jennings, 18, of Far Rockaway, was arraigned on a 55-count indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree, second and third degrees, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal sale of a firearm in the first degree, two counts of criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree. If convicted, Jennings faces up to 20 years in prison.

Reynaldo Rojas, 33, of Far Rockaway, was arraigned on a 55-count indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first and third degrees, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree and criminal sale of a ghost gun in the second degree. If convicted, Rojas faces up to 20 years in prison.

Matthew Wilson, 33, of Far Rockaway, is charged in a criminal complaint with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a firearm, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition. If convicted, Wilson faces up to 15 years in prison.

Mahlachi Parham, 22, of Far Rockaway, is charged in a criminal complaint with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a firearm, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second

degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition. If convicted, Parham faces up to 15 years in prison.

Zabdiel Lucas, 25, of Far Rockaway, is charged in a criminal complaint with two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a firearm, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition. If convicted, Lucas faces up to 15 years in prison.

Dontae Soto, 20, of Far Rockaway, is charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, two counts of criminal possession of a weapon in the third degrees and criminal possession of a firearm. If convicted, Soto faces up to 15 years in prison.

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