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FIVE INDICTED FOR SELLING NARCOTICS IN ASTORIA HOUSES

*Long-Term Operation Included Undercover Buys of Cocaine, Ecstasy and a Firearm
One Defendant Allegedly Sold to Undercover While Working as a NYCHA Employee*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced that five defendants have been variously indicted on conspiracy, criminal sale of a controlled substance and gun sale charges following an 18-month-long undercover operation that resulted in the seizure of more than 750 Percocet and ecstasy pills – most laced with either fentanyl or methamphetamine – and a large quantity of cocaine. The narcotics were allegedly sold by the defendants at the New York City Housing Authority’s Astoria Houses complex, where they all lived, including a NYCHA employee who worked at the Latimer Gardens Housing Complex. The total amount of narcotics confiscated had a street value of approximately \$15,000.

District Attorney Katz said, “These five defendants are accused of callously selling poison and at least one firearm out of a city-owned housing complex that is home to young children and families. Thank you to our partners at the NYPD -- including the brave undercover officers – and the city Department of Investigation as well as members of my Major Economic Crimes Bureau for their hard work on this case.”

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “These five defendants, including one NYCHA employee, trafficked narcotics in NYCHA’s Astoria Houses, where they lived, jeopardizing the safety of this residential community, according to the charges. I thank the Queens County District Attorney’s Office and the NYPD for their partnership and commitment to keep public housing free from dangerous criminal conduct.”

Four of the defendants were arraigned yesterday and today on a 40-count indictment variously charging them with conspiracy in the second and fourth degrees, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first, second, third and fifth degrees, criminal sale of a firearm in the third degree and falsifying business records in the first degree. **(See Addendum)**

Supreme Court Justice Karen Gopee ordered the defendants to return to court on November 7, 2024.

One defendant has not been apprehended.

According to the charges and investigation:

- In March 2023, the NYPD Queens North Narcotics team began a narcotics investigation at the Astoria Houses complex involving multiple subjects.
- A total of 30 buys, carried out by undercover NYPD officers over the course of 18 months, led to the purchase of 103 Percocet pills, most of which contained fentanyl; 649 ecstasy pills, most containing methamphetamine; and about 300 grams of cocaine. One of the buys took place in the Ravenswood Houses.
- One defendant also allegedly sold an illegal firearm to an undercover officer.
- The investigation further revealed that one of the defendants, I-Kym Jackson, sold narcotics to an undercover while working as a NYCHA employee. He is separately charged with falsifying business records in the first degree for submitting a false timesheet to NYCHA.

- On Wednesday, law enforcement officials carried out court-authorized search and arrest warrants, secured by the District Attorney’s office, at four separate apartments inside the Astoria Houses.
- The search resulted in the arrest of the four defendants as well as the seizure of a quantity of heroin and drug paraphernalia including scales with drug residue.

The investigation was conducted by members of the NYPD Queens North Narcotics including Detective Jeffrey Adaszewski under the supervision of Lieutenant David Rodriguez, Captain Kenneth Braumann, and Deputy Chief Robert Gallitelli. Assistant Inspector General Enio Bencosme of the New York City Department of Investigation provided crucial assistance.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Candice Smith of the District Attorney’s Major Economic Crimes Bureau under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Kieran Linehan, Supervisor in the Major Narcotics Unit, Mary Lowenburg, Bureau Chief, Catherine C. Kane, Senior Deputy Bureau Chief, and Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, and under the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Gerard Brave.

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ADDENDUM

Darryl Sanford, 40, of Astoria was arraigned on an indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree and multiple counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second, third and fifth degrees. Sanford was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree, criminal possession of a controlled substance in the seventh degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the fourth degree. If convicted of the top count, Sanford faces a potential maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Andre Smith, 43, of Astoria was arraigned on an indictment charging him with conspiracy in the second degree, criminal sale of a controlled substance in the first degree and criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second degree. Smith faces a potential maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

I-Kym Jackson, 31, of Astoria was arraigned on an indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree; multiple counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second and third degrees; and falsifying business records in the first degree. If convicted of the top count, Jackson faces a potential maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

Jamar Howard, 38, of Astoria was arraigned on an indictment charging him with conspiracy in the fourth degree; multiple counts of criminal sale of a controlled substance in the second, third and fifth degrees. Howard was also charged in a criminal complaint with criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree and seventh degrees and criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree. If convicted of the top count. If convicted of the top count, Howard faces a potential maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

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

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