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DRUG TRAFFICKING OPERATION DISMANTLED IN JAMAICA

*Nine Defendants Indicted on Charges of Selling and Possessing Cocaine and Heroin Laced with Fentanyl
One Defendant Charged with Operating as Major Trafficker
Approximately 466 Grams of Cocaine, 288 Grams of Fentanyl and 91 Grams of Heroin Seized During
Court-Authorized Search Warrants*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz announced the indictment of nine individuals charged with conspiracy, drug trafficking and other crimes following a two-year investigation into a narcotics organization based in Jamaica. The investigation, dubbed “Operation the Price is Right,” included a series of undercover drug buys and use of electronic surveillance.

District Attorney Katz said: “The indictment of nine individuals in this case sends a clear message: we will not relent in our efforts to dismantle drug rings and hold accountable those who peddle poison in our communities. I’d like to thank members of my Major Economic Crimes Bureau and the NYPD, especially the undercover officers who placed themselves directly in harm’s way, for their work on this case.”

Three of the defendants were apprehended on Tuesday following the execution of court-authorized search warrants and arraigned today on a 48-count indictment charging them with conspiracy, criminal sale of a controlled substance, criminal possession of a controlled substance, criminal possession of a weapon, criminal possession of a firearm, attempted criminal possession of a weapon and reckless endangerment. Queens Supreme Court Justice Stephanie Zaro ordered the defendants to return to court February 13, 2025. **(See addendum)**

Three additional defendants were already in custody at the time of the takedown and will be arraigned on the indictment at a later date. Three others remain at large.

According to the charges and investigation, the crew, under the leadership of John Price, sold crack cocaine, powder cocaine, heroin, heroin mixed with fentanyl, and fentanyl at various locations throughout Jamaica. The primary activity took place in the vicinity of 109th Avenue and 157th Street, directly adjacent to the P.S. 48, The David N. Dinkins School for Community Service.

In intercepted communications, the defendants spoke in code and referred to heroin as “food” and in one instance said that a customer “loved that chicken last time.”

A total of 17 buys of cocaine and heroin took place among undercover police officers and the defendants between January 2023 and October 2024, resulting in \$1,575 worth of seized drugs.

Defendant Kenny Paul, of Rosedale, allegedly acted as a supplier for the operation. On November 22, intercepted communications indicated that he had fired his weapon at a house in Rosedale after a drug-related dispute. A search warrant was secured for his residence and four illegal guns, 1.5 kilograms of cocaine, several pounds of cannabis and \$140,000 in proceeds were recovered. Paul was arrested at that time and is currently remanded.

On December 17, law enforcement officials conducted court-authorized search warrants at three residences in Springfield Gardens and Jamaica, resulting in the arrests of the three defendants and the seizure of:

- One loaded .44-caliber revolver
- 132 glassine envelopes containing approximately 44 grams of heroin

- 103 packages containing a mixture of glassine envelopes and Ziplock bags each containing approximately 75 grams of cocaine
- Two twists containing approximately 264 grams of fentanyl
- One Ziplock bag containing approximately 3 grams of fentanyl
- One twist containing approximately 11 grams of heroin
- Two twists containing approximately 36 grams of black tar heroin
- Four twists containing approximately 317 grams of powder cocaine
- Two twists containing approximately 62 grams of crack cocaine
- Two scales with cocaine residue
- One strainer
- One blender with a substance that appeared to be fentanyl residue
- A silver press used to press narcotics into square shapes
- A rolled up \$5 bill folded with a straw containing approximately 9 grams of fentanyl
- A green plastic vial containing approximately 12 grams of fentanyl
- Black Ziplock bag containing approximately 2 grams of cocaine
- A folded letter with defendant Romeo Izquierdo's name which contained approximately 10 grams of crack cocaine
- 10 boxes containing more than 200 empty glassine envelopes
- Several large Ziplock bags containing numerous smaller sized Ziplock bags
- 9 mm cartridge

The investigation was conducted by Detective Michael McCready (now retired) and Detective Jaipal Ramdat of the New York Police Department's Queens South Major Narcotics Unit, under the supervision of former Lieutenant Eric Sonnenberg, Lieutenant Javier Rodriguez, Captain Charles Campisi and Inspector Donald Boller.

Assistant District Attorney Allison Wright, Supervisor in 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, and Jonathan Scharf, Deputy Bureau Chief, 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

JOHN PRICE, a.k.a "Stubby", 48, of Jamaica, has been indicted on charges of operating as a major trafficker, criminal sale of a controlled substance, conspiracy and attempted criminal possession of a weapon. If convicted of the top count, Price faces a potential maximum sentence of life in prison. Price was also arraigned on a criminal complaint charging him with two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree and criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree. He was ordered to return to court on February 13, 2025.

KENNY PAUL, 43, of Rosedale, has been indicted on charges of criminal possession of a controlled substance, conspiracy, criminal possession of a weapon, reckless endangerment and criminal possession of cannabis. If convicted of the top count, Paul faces a potential maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. He is in custody following an arrest in November and will be arraigned on the indictment at a later date.

LAMELL FORD, 43, of Far Rockaway, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy, criminal sale of a controlled substance and attempted criminal possession of a weapon. If convicted of the top count, Ford faces a potential maximum sentence of nine years in prison. He was ordered to return to court on February 13, 2025.

ROMEO IZQUIERDO, 37, of Jamaica, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy and criminal sale of a controlled substance. If convicted of the top count, Izquierdo faces a potential maximum sentence nine years in prison. Izquierdo was also arraigned on a criminal complaint charging him with two counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the first degree, three counts of criminal possession of a controlled substance in the third degree, criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree, four counts of

criminally using drug paraphernalia in the second degree and unlawful possession of pistol or revolver ammunition. He faces a potential maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. He was ordered to return to court on February 13, 2025.

VICTOR IZQUIERDO, 31, of Jamaica, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy, criminal sale of a controlled substance, criminal possession of a weapon, and criminal possession of a firearm. If convicted of the top count, Izquierdo faces a potential maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. He is currently serving a prison sentence on a separate case and will be arraigned on the indictment at a later date.

LEON SPEARS, 63, of Jamaica, has been indicted on charges of conspiracy, criminal sale of a controlled substance, criminal possession of a weapon, and criminal possession of a firearm. If convicted of the top count, Spears faces a potential maximum sentence of 12 years in prison. He is currently held on bail, and hospitalized, on a separate case and will be arraigned bedside at a later date.

Three additional defendants remain at large.

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