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PRESS RELEASE

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D.A. McMahon and NYPD announce takedown of major heroin distribution ring

****Two Defendants indicted and charged with “Drug Kingpin” statute ****

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. – Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon and NYPD Commissioner William J. Bratton today announced the takedown of one of the longest running and most profitable heroin distribution routes currently operating on Staten Island. Five individuals were indicted and charged with operating a narcotics trafficking network that sold large quantities of heroin throughout swaths of Staten Island. Six additional defendants were arrested during search warrant executions that yielded 948 glassines of heroin, approximately \$28,000 in cash and two firearms. LOUIS CARABALLO and JOSEPH BREFO-SARPONG are both indicted and charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker, a class A-I felony, for selling and possessing more than \$75,000 worth of heroin in less than a six-month period. This charge, often referred to as New York’s “Drug Kingpin statute,” was passed by the legislature in 2009 and is used for major narcotics traffickers or managers of drug trafficking organizations. Those convicted under this statute, even with no prior sentence, may face an indeterminate prison sentence of 25 years to life. CARABALLO and BREFO-SARPONG are the first to be charged under this statute in Richmond County.

“Drug dealers who profit on the backs of vulnerable addicts are sorely mistaken in thinking they can push their deadly poison in our neighborhoods and get away with it. Today’s major takedown will deal a devastating blow to the borough’s drug trade and make Staten Island a safer place,” said District Attorney Michael E. McMahon. “The defendants arrested today allegedly ran one of the largest heroin distribution rings in the borough, peddling their product on residential streets, in and around shopping centers and near train stations from Dongan Hills to Tottenville. My office will continue working with our partners in the NYPD to combat the heroin epidemic at its source by rooting out the dealers and holding them responsible for the lives they have destroyed. I would like to commend the outstanding work of the prosecutors in my office’s Investigations Bureau as well as the officers in Narcotics Borough Staten Island for pursuing this case.”

"The resurgence of heroin has resulted in increased opioid related deaths throughout New York and, in particular, the area of Staten Island. These defendants are directly responsible for feeding this deadly epidemic. This focused investigation was successful in bringing down the people responsible for distributing this poison, in building a strong case that will hopefully help put a dent in New York's illegal heroin trade and sends a message to others who may consider doing so," said Police Commissioner William J. Bratton.

The two-year investigation began in October 2014 and was dubbed "Broken Boulevard" in reference to the numerous locations along Hylan Boulevard where the dealers often peddled their poison. The defendants operated like a delivery service – a customer would make a call to a dispatcher, who would then direct a crew member to meet the customer at a predetermined location. The defendants were known to deal outside of fast food restaurants including McDonalds and Dunkin' Donuts, shopping centers and stores including Macy's, K-Mart and H&M, as well as on residential streets and near train stations throughout Staten Island.

"This joint action between my office and the NYPD is a major step in returning a safe and secure Hylan Boulevard to the people of Staten Island," continued McMahon.

Arrested and indicted Wednesday for narcotics sales were the following suspects: **LOUIS CARABALLO, JOSEPH BREFO-SARPONG, MICHAEL WARD, CHRISTOPHER BALDASSANO** and **JONATHAN LINDENMUTH**.

Arrested during the execution of search warrants were: **MELISSA BUSCEMI, SABRINA LINDENMUTH, DEVIN FERRARI, JUAQUIN FREIRE, ALFONSO MANZO, and TIFFANY MORALES**.

The charges contained in the indictments and criminal complaints are merely allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney David Frey, Chief of the Investigations Bureau.

The lead NYPD investigators on the case are Detective Joseph Ryan and Sgt. Kenneth Tysdal of Narcotics Borough Staten Island, acting under the supervision of Deputy Inspector Dominick D'Orazio.

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