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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **D.A. McMahon and NYPD Commissioner James P. O'Neill Announce Takedown of Heroin and Fentanyl-dealing Network**

*\*\*Targets dealt heroin and fentanyl in Staten Island, including on school grounds; Investigation expanded after overdose death of Staten Island woman and her unborn baby; Drugs funneled into Staten Island from supplier in New Jersey\*\**

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Staten Island District Attorney Michel E. McMahon and NYPD Commissioner James P. O'Neill today announced the takedown of a drug-dealing network that transported heroin and fentanyl into Staten Island from New Jersey to be sold in several neighborhoods throughout the borough, including on school grounds. In total, five dealers have been indicted on felony drug charges. Search warrants executed at three locations also yielded quantities of drugs and related paraphernalia.

The investigation utilized information obtained through the Staten Island Overdose Response Initiative created last year by District Attorney McMahon and the NYPD. This initiative allows law enforcement to investigate overdose deaths in an effort to root out drug dealers and offer supportive services to grieving families. Specifically, during the ORI investigation of the overdose death of a Staten Island woman and her unborn baby, a heroin and fentanyl-dealing network was identified that included the deceased's fiancé, **Frank DeGaetano**. Additionally, as part of our joint efforts with the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, a supplier who operated out of New Jersey was also arrested and indicted on felony drug charges.

"This takedown puts a crimp in the pipeline of heroin and fentanyl being funneled into Staten Island and sends a strong message to the drug dealers who think they can purvey this poison in our communities and get away with it," said District Attorney Michael E. McMahon. "We will continue to investigate every tragic overdose and hold dealers accountable for the lives and families they have destroyed. These defendants were indicted on felony drug charges thanks to the hard work done by this office, NYPD Narcotics Borough Staten Island and the Middlesex County Prosecutors Office. These brazen heroin and fentanyl sales will not go unpunished. Drug dealers will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law as we continue in our fight against the opioid epidemic."

"This is an example of how the NYPD is doing business these days. Precision policing - targeting the relatively small percentage of people who commit much of the crime in New York," Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill said. "In this case, the people arrested not only contributed to, but perpetuated, a drug epidemic that is affecting New York and our nation as a whole. This investigation just marks the beginning of how we are reclaiming our city."

The 11-month investigation began in February 2016 and was dubbed "Blue Angel," a reference to the pregnant woman who fatally overdosed last year. During the Overdose Response Initiative investigation into her death, a network was identified that had been selling heroin and fentanyl in neighborhoods such as Rossville, Richmondtown, Tottenville, Great Kills and Rosebank. Additionally, the source and supplier of this network, **Jessica Chaikin**, was operating from Edison Township, New Jersey, and transporting heroin and fentanyl over the Outerbridge Crossing to be sold in Staten Island. One of the defendants, **Amanda Dimarinis**, who works as a Paraprofessional for I.S. 49, allegedly sold fentanyl on school grounds during her lunchbreak.

The defendants are: **Jessica Chaikin**, 28, a supplier, **Frank DeGaetano**, 28, and **Amanda Gavrity**, 25, both distributors, **Amanda Dimarinis**, 25, a dealer, and **Dylan Lopez**, 27, a dealer.

Search warrants executed at three locations yielded approximately 400 glassines of heroin, a quantity of cocaine, over \$11,000 in cash as well as a scale. The bulk of the drugs recovered – 329 glassines of heroin – were found inside the home of **DeGaetano**.

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

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The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant District Attorney Jane Grinberg under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Karen Varriale, Chief of the Narcotics-Investigations Bureau and Assistant District Attorney Michele Molfetta, Deputy Chief of the Narcotics-Investigations Bureau.

The lead NYPD investigator on the case is Detective Andrew Fago of Narcotics Borough Staten Island, acting under the supervision of Sgt. Kenneth Tysdal, and Captain Theodore Lauterborn, Commanding Officer of Narcotics Borough Staten Island.

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