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**“OPERATION FIRE & DICE” BY BRONX DA, DEA STRIKE FORCE & NYPD
RESULTS IN 14 PEOPLE INDICTED FOR TRAFFICKING HEROIN
Defendants Sold Heroin & Fentanyl in Bronx and Four States;
Five Kilos of High-Quality Heroin Found Stashed in Car Hauler**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a joint investigation by the Bronx District Attorney’s Office and the Drug Enforcement Administration Strike Force along with the New York City Police Department has resulted in the indictment of 14 people for trafficking heroin and fentanyl in the Bronx, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia.

District Attorney Clark said, “These defendants allegedly peddled ultra-pure heroin as well as heroin laced with fentanyl, callously disregarding how poisonous and volatile this mixture is. The narcotics came from Mexico and were trucked cross-country to the Bronx, where one of the main defendants allegedly sold large quantities out of his home on a residential street to dealers who sold it in the Bronx and down the east coast. Two have been charged as Major Traffickers which could carry life in prison. We will aggressively prosecute those who foster the opioid catastrophe.”

DEA Special Agent in Charge James J. Hunt said, “Sometimes, the most dangerous drug dealer is the one next door. This criminal operation exemplifies how illegal drugs are trafficked into NYC neighborhoods and how DEA works with our law enforcement partners to shut them down. In this case, a street-level drug buy led to the identification of transnational heroin suppliers responsible for fueling opioid addiction throughout our communities.”

NYPD Commissioner James P. O’Neill said, “As we have seen too many times before, heroin laced with fentanyl is lethal. Making the situation worse, the heroin’s purity was far greater than what is commonly seen in New York City. This morning, 14 defendants find themselves under arrest on serious drug charges. And thanks to the detectives, agents, and prosecutors, the Bronx will be safer tonight with this poison off our streets.”

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District Attorney Clark said a 159-count indictment charges 10 people with operating in the Bronx, and a second indictment with 32 counts charges four people from Manhattan and New Jersey.

Nine of the defendants were arrested in a takedown yesterday and arraigned before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Robert Neary. They are due back in court on June 14 and 21, 2017. Two defendants—Ramon Walters and Troy Callwood—are charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker, and they and the other defendants are variously charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance and Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance.

According to the investigation, which gets its name from the high-quality heroin—referred to as “fire”—and the brand stamp on some of the glassines of heroin—a pair of dice—one of the main defendants in the case is Ramon Walters, 42. He worked with other defendants to obtain the narcotics from Mexico, and set the sale price, mixed the drugs and stored them at his home at 1517 Lurting Avenue, where other members of the conspiracy came to get the narcotics.

The house was protected by hi-tech surveillance cameras and flood lights, and when authorities executed the search warrant there, Walters was discovered flushing alleged fentanyl down a toilet. About \$10,000 was seized.

Authorities seized five kilograms of 80% -plus purity heroin in Pennsylvania, which was stashed in the trunks of two cars on a car carrier. The total amount of drugs seized is equivalent to 15,474 glassines of narcotics with a street value of \$300,410.

The case was initiated by the Bronx DA’s Office and NYPD’s Bronx Narcotics in May, 2016. DEA Strike Force joined the investigation in August, after which the sources of the supply and distribution network were identified.

Angel M. Melendez, special agent in charge of ICE Homeland Security Investigations in New York said, “These individuals are a part of the reason why heroin is flooding our city streets and flowing into the hands of our young people. We remain committed to working together with our law enforcement partners and within their task forces to rid the streets of these deadly drugs and arrest those drug pushers.”

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New York State Police Superintendent George P. Beach II said, “Because of the critical partnerships forged through the New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force and the collaborative efforts of our law enforcement partners, we were able to dismantle a dangerous heroin/fentanyl drug trafficking operation. The arrests of these criminals reinforces that we will continue to be vigilant in stopping the flow of these dangerous narcotics into our neighborhoods. The sale of such highly addictive drugs perpetuates a cycle of substance abuse which poses a significant threat to safety and quality of life within our communities, and it will not be tolerated. I commend our members and our law enforcement partners for their hard work in uncovering this operation.”

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Daniel Haines, Daniel Collado and Kieran Linehan of the Special Investigations Bureau, with the assistance of Yanitza Ortiz and Enoch Pei under the supervision of Bureau Chief Tarek Rahman, under the overall supervision of Stuart Levy, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division and Jean T. Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked Bronx District Attorney’s Detective Investigators Brian O’Loughlin and John Reilly, under the supervision of Lieutenant Rocco Galasso and Chief Frank Chiara, NYPD Detective Alejandro Olan and Deputy Inspector Lorenzo Johnson of Bronx Narcotics and DEA Strike Force Group Z-52 for their assistance in this case. District Attorney Clark also thanked the Somerset, NJ Prosecutor’s Office, Union County, NJ Prosecutor’s Office, Luzerne County, PA District Attorney’s Office, Pennsylvania State Police, New Jersey State Police, the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

District Attorney Clark also announced that her office filed a civil lawsuit yesterday in Bronx Supreme Court suing the defendants for the alleged proceeds of their drug trafficking during the six-month investigation. The civil action is being litigated by Assistant District Attorneys Cristina Paquette and Jennifer Shaw of the Asset Forfeiture Unit under the supervision of Lisa Waller, Deputy Chief of the Civil Litigation Bureau.

The (DEA) New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force comprises agents and officers of the DEA, the New York City Police Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement – Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the New York State Police, the U. S.

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Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Marshals Service, New York National Guard, the Clarkstown Police Department, U.S. Coast Guard, Port Washington Police Department and New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.

DEFENDANTS

RAMON WALTERS, 42, 1517 Lurting Avenue, Bronx

EARL WILLIAMS JR., 39, 1032 Aldus Street, Bronx

DENIA HERNANDEZ, 39, 1517 Lurting Avenue, Bronx

ROBERTO DAVILA, 42, 3124 Country Club Road, Bronx

LUIS PADRO, 45, 2523 University Avenue, Bronx

TROY D. CALLWOOD, 45, 2714 Gifford Avenue, Bronx

JASON RUIZ, 30, 906 Simpson Street, Bronx

FRANCISCO SEVERINO, 32, 3419 Irwin Avenue, Bronx

DILANGIE FABIAN, 28, 735 Walton Avenue, Bronx

MICHAEL VIERA, 55, Bethlehem PA

ELVIN CASTILLO, 40, Hillside, NJ

JOAN SILVERIO, 37 Manhattan

FAUSTO MUNOZ RODRIGUEZ, 37, Paterson, NJ

JOHN DOE