



Department of Investigation

Press Release

DISTRICT ATTORNEY
QUEENS COUNTY
25-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568
(718) 286-6000

Richard A. Brown
District Attorney

**FOR RELEASE:
IMMEDIATE
May 7, 2001**

**CONTACT: MARY DE BOURBON
BETSY HERZOG
(718) 286-6315**

Three Individuals and Three Corporations Charged with Illegal Dumping of Construction Debris at College Point Athletic Field Site; 734 Count Indictment Filed in "Field of Dreams"

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by New York City Commissioner of Investigation Edward J. Kuriansky, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Sanitation Kevin P. Farrell, Commissioner Joel A. Miele, Sr., of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, and New York City Trade Waste Commission Chairman Raymond V. Casey, announced today the indictment of three individuals, and three corporations allegedly controlled by them, on charges of illegally dumping more than 36,700 cubic yards of demolition debris at a College Point site leased by a local civic group from the City of New York to build athletic fields -- a so-called "Field of Dreams" -- for the use of neighborhood residents and their children.

District Attorney Brown said, "This is a classic tale of selfishness and greed perpetrated upon the residents of College Point and their children in total disregard of their safety and in violation of environmental laws. Indeed, as a result of our joint investigation, it is alleged that in order to save approximately \$5 a cubic yard in carting and dumping costs, the defendants knowingly dumped metal, glass, sheet rock, wire, plumbing fixtures, and other dangerous materials at a site that they knew was not only not licensed to receive those materials, but, more significantly, at a site upon which youngsters and others would likely to be injured as a result, and that they went to great lengths to conceal their activities by filing false tracking reports with the New York City Department of Sanitation and the City's environmental authorities."

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "These defendants not only polluted the land for personal profit and left

3 Individuals & 3 Corporations Charged With Illegal Dumping

the City holding the bag for over \$10 million in cleanup costs. But they turned a 'field of dreams' into a child's nightmare and robbed the kids of College Point of three precious, irretrievable summers of their youth."

Commissioner Farrell said, "The Sanitation Department has completed the removal of 210,779 tons of construction and demolition debris from the playing fields of the College Point Sports Association. Nearly 4,300 Sanitation Workers and supervisory personnel worked during 63-week period so that further preparation of the 'Field of Dreams' could be realized. I am pleased that those individuals and corporations who violated the illegal dumping laws have been caught and indicted. I applaud the efforts of the Queens District Attorney's office, the City's Departments of Investigation and Environmental Protection, and the Sanitation Police's own thorough investigation. Illegal dumping is unlawful. I caution all illegal dumping violators throughout the city -- we are watching and you will be caught."

Commissioner Miele said, "This case is a classic effort of cooperation between multiple agencies. We at DEP were pleased to provide the environmental expertise, site assessment and hazardous materials sampling that were critical to bringing the case to trial and protecting the public from potential harm."

Trade Waste Commission Chairman Casey said: "This investigation is an excellent example of successful collaboration amongst law enforcement agencies. I wish to thank the Queens County District Attorney's Office and the New York City Department of Investigation for their fine efforts in the performance of this investigation with the Trade Waste Commission (TWC). The investigation also underscores the commitment of the TWC to thoroughly investigate allegations of fraud and criminality by private carters operating in the city, in order to rid the industry of the criminal element plaguing it for many years. Bringing these environmental criminals to justice is also one step towards the City's returning the ball fields to the children of Queens. Additionally, after learning of the indictment today, I have requested the City's attorney to initiate affirmative litigation to recoup the damages caused by these defendants."

District Attorney Brown said, "In the mid 1960's, neighborhood residents began to convert twenty-two acres of vacant land belonging to the City of New York located near Ulmer Avenue and 127th Street in the College Point section of Queens into community athletic fields. Sometime thereafter, the College Point Sports Association leased the site from the City at a nominal cost to develop it into a community sports complex. A company named Enviro-Fill, Inc. offered to upgrade the site and build the complex, agreeing to use approximately 140,000 cubic yards of clean fill to level the site at no charge to the City or the Association. Its revenues were to be derived from area contractors who would pay Enviro-Fill \$8 to \$10 a yard for the privilege of dumping clean fill excavated from their construction sites onto the College Point site. Instead, it is alleged, the contractors, including the defendants indicted today, trucked to and dumped construction and demolition debris at the site and covered it with a thin layer of top soil that quickly wore away, revealing plumbing fixtures, rusty pipes, wallboard, concrete, and other dangerous material, creating a hazard at the site and making the land completely unuseable. The investigation is continuing with regard to the involvement of those contractors not charged in today's indictment."

District Attorney Brown identified the defendants as Francesco Casalino, 42, of 35 Woods Avenue, Malverne, New York, and his brothers, Anthony Casalino, 36, of 90-03 157th Avenue, Howard Beach, New York, and Joseph Casalino, 52, of 153-28 80th Street, Howard Beach. The corporations indicted today are all owned and operated by the Casalino brothers and, it is alleged, were used in furtherance of the crimes charged. The companies are : Casalino Interior Demolition Corp., located at 66-00 Long

3 Individuals & 3 Corporations Charged With Illegal Dumping

Island Expressway, Maspeth; Citiwide Recycling Corp., a solid waste transfer station at 213 Meadow Street, Brooklyn and Astro Trucking Inc., which is also located at the Maspeth address.

The defendants are each charged with 383 counts of Falsifying Business Records in the first degree, 8 counts each of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the first and second degrees, Conspiracy in the fifth degree, 254 counts of Release to Environment of More Than Seventy Cubic Yards of Solid Waste and 80 counts of Release to Environment of More Than Ten Cubic Yards of Solid Waste.

The individual defendants face up to four years in prison upon conviction and fines of up to \$25,000 on each environmental violation. The corporations face fines of up to twice the amount of their illegal gains.

The investigation was conducted by Department of Investigation Examining Attorneys Lisa Lee and Sandra Richman under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Dyana Lee and Inspector General for the Department of Environmental Protection Clive Morrisk, and Lt. Thomas O'Brien of the Trade Waste Commission under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner Thomas McCormack.

Assistant District Attorney John A. Scarpa of District Attorney Brown's Economic Crimes Bureau, which is under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Brian J. Mich and Diane M. Peress and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney Peter A. Crusco, Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Michael J. Mansfield, and Counsel Linda M. Cantoni, presented the matter to the Grand Jury, and is in charge of the prosecution.

It should be noted that an indictment is merely an accusation and that the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.