



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**NEW YORK CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER RAYMOND W. KELLY, U.S. ATTORNEY FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT ROSALYNN MAUSKOPF, QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY RICHARD BROWN, ASSOCIATE SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE NEW YORK DIVISION OF THE DEA DEREK MALTZ AND THE NEW YORK STATE POLICE ANNOUNCE THE ARREST OF 37 INDIVIDUALS FOR DRUG DEALING IN THE QUEENSBRIDGE PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District Rosalynn Mauskopf, Queens District Attorney Richard Brown, Associate Special Agent in Charge New York Division of the DEA Derek Maltz and the New York State Police today announced the arrest of 37 individuals for drug dealing in the Queensbridge public housing development in Long Island City. The Department is currently looking for 12 additional suspects. The dealers were unaffiliated small crews or individuals all buying for a single wholesaler. The retailers sold primarily crack and powdered cocaine.

The case began in April 2004 when the 114th Precinct identified the Queensbridge Houses as the most entrenched drug dealing location in the precinct. The housing development, with over 3,000 apartments, is the largest in the city. For years, its residents were subjected to drug dealers and their customers doing business in the courtyards and individual apartments.

Initially, officers from the 114th Precinct, Queens Narcotics and Public Service Area 9 pooled their knowledge to develop a complete picture of the drug dealing operation. After months of undercover buys and surveillance, the "Dream Team" was identified as the wholesaler and the overarching regulator drug activities in the complex. Any individual or group could sell in the development as long as they bought their product from the Dream Team.

In June of 2004, members of the Drug Enforcement Task Force joined the investigation. The Task Force is made up of members of the New York City Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the New York State Police. The Department of Investigation also assisted in this case.

The case was given "Weed and Seed," designation under a special Federal program that gave investigators additional resources, including potentially stiffer sanctions. When charged federally, suspects could face significantly longer prison sentences.

Commissioner Kelly said, "The 'Dream Team' thought if they operated quietly, they could operate indefinitely. They were dreaming. They came up against a law enforcement team, whose members each brought something unique and important to the table. From knowledge of the housing complex to undercover expertise and prosecutorial experience, all the bases were covered. I want to thank and congratulate all of the police officers, agents and troopers for their outstanding work."

United States Attorney Mauskopf stated, "Today's arrests are the result of a coordinated law enforcement and prosecutorial initiative to rid the Queensbridge Housing development of a gang of violent drug dealers who held this community hostage and put our school children at risk. This case clearly demonstrates the success that can be achieved through federal, state and local law enforcement cooperation."

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendants have been charged with selling cocaine and accused of drug dealing in and near the Queensbridge Houses, a public housing development. The charges are serious and some defendants upon conviction face sentences of up to 25 years in prison. Queensbridge is the largest public housing development in the City. It is home to some 7,000 people who reside in over 3,100 apartments. The residents of the Queensbridge Houses are entitled to live in an environment free from drugs and violence."

New York State Police Superintendent Wayne E. Bennett said, "Through a well coordinated effort of federal, state and New York City law enforcement, members of a violent drug organization operating in one of the largest housing developments in the United States have been brought to justice on a variety of serious drugs and weapons charges. These arrests, using a combination of federal and state criminal statutes, will keep the worst of these violent offenders off the street for many years."

Associate Special Agent in Charge Maltz stated: "I want to advise the public that we in DEA, are joined with the NYPD and NYSP, and are 100 percent committed to the citizens of this great city. We will continue to align our resources with our law enforcement counterparts in an effort to eradicate major drug trafficking groups like the organizations that were operating in the Queensbridge community. We will continue to assist the NYPD and supplement their efforts to protect the NYC communities and provide a better quality of life."

Among the 37 arrested during this takedown, 17 will face federal charges. The additional 20 will be prosecuted by the Queens DA.

The investigation is ongoing and more arrests are expected.