



**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**  
*Southern District of New York*

ACTING U.S. ATTORNEY AUDREY STRAUSS

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Jim Margolin, Nicholas Biase  
(212) 637-2600

HSI

Rachael Yong Yow  
(646) 648-2995

NYPD

Devora Kaye, Alfred Baker  
(646) 610-6700

DOI

Diane Struzzi, Nicole Turso  
(212) 825-5931

**BRONX GANG MEMBER CHARGED WITH RACKETEERING AND  
FIREARMS OFFENSES**

*Defendant Charged in Connection with April 2017 Shooting in Which 12-Year-Old Child Was  
Struck By Gunfire*

Audrey Strauss, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Dermot F. Shea, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD"), Peter C. Fitzhugh, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), and Margaret Garnett, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced the unsealing today of an Indictment charging NICHOLAS JOSEPH, a/k/a "Gotti," a/k/a "Finesse," with various racketeering and firearms offenses relating to the Castle Hill Crew, which operates principally in the Castle Hill Houses in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx. The charges include assault with a deadly weapon and attempted murder in aid of racketeering for the April 28, 2017, shooting in the Story Playground in Soundview, during which a 12-year-old child was struck by gunfire.

JOSEPH was taken into custody last night and will be presented before U.S. Magistrate Judge Sarah Netburn later today. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge P. Kevin Castel.

Acting U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss said: "As alleged in the indictment, the defendant carried out a shooting in a playground that injured a 12-year-old child. Thanks to the extraordinary work of the NYPD, HSI, and DOI, the defendant now faces federal charges for his crimes."

HSI Special Agent-in Charge Peter C. Fitzhugh said: "As alleged, the Castle Hill gang was involved in drug dealing, firearms offenses, and conspiracy to murder. Their ruthlessness and blatant disregard for human life is further evidenced as Joseph is alleged to have opened fire on a rival gang member at a playground, only to have a child caught in the crossfire. We too will be relentless in our commitment to public safety and removing these violent gang members from

our streets and playgrounds. Every parent and child should feel safe to play in their neighborhoods without wondering where the next stray bullet will come from.”

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said: “This is a tragic example of how gang activity devastates our public housing neighborhoods and the families who live there, in this case, making a children’s playground perilous for a 12-year-old child. We cannot and will not stand for that violence. Working with our law enforcement partners we will make sure that those allegedly involved in this kind of brutality will be held accountable, and today’s arrest is part of that joint effort.”

As alleged in the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court<sup>1</sup>:

JOSEPH is a member and associate of the Castle Hill Crew, a racketeering enterprise that operates principally in the Castle Hill Houses in the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx. In order to enrich the enterprise, preserve and protect the power of the enterprise, and enhance its criminal operations, Castle Hill Crew members and associates committed, conspired, attempted, and threatened to commit acts of violence, including murder; distributed and possessed with intent to distribute narcotics; engaged in fraud; and obtained, possessed, and used firearms.

On or about April 28, 2017, JOSEPH and others shot at a rival gang member in the vicinity of the Story Playground in the Bronx, New York, during which a 12-year-old child was injured.

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The defendant is charged with one count of racketeering conspiracy, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; one count of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, and attempted assault with a deadly weapon in aid of racketeering, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; one count of using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence, which was brandished and discharged, which carries a maximum sentence of life and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison; and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

Ms. Strauss praised the outstanding investigative work of the NYPD, HSI, and DOI.

This case is being handled by the Office’s Violent and Organized Crime Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys Andrew K. Chan and Justin V. Rodriguez are in charge of the prosecution.

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<sup>1</sup> As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Indictment constitutes only allegations, and every fact described herein should be treated as an allegation.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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