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103-2017
For Immediate Release
December 21, 2017

**MAJOR HEROIN AND COCAINE TRAFFICKING GROUP DISMANTLED,
21 PEOPLE INDICTED, TEN KILOS OF HEROIN AND \$20,000 SEIZED
Two Defendants Indicted For Operating As Major Traffickers Could Face Life in Prison
Narcotics Trafficked Throughout NY Metropolitan Area**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that a joint investigation with the New York City Police Department with the assistance of Homeland Security Investigations has resulted in the indictment of 21 people for trafficking heroin and cocaine throughout the Bronx, reaching into upstate New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

District Attorney Clark said, "Through the efforts of a year-long joint investigation, we have dismantled a major drug organization and charged the defendants with over 100 counts of various serious charges. Two of the defendants are charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker and could face life behind bars. The defendants allegedly peddled heroin and cocaine throughout the Bronx, spreading their operation to two other states. We will go wherever our investigation leads to make our borough safe and with our law enforcement partners, we will continue to pursue and prosecute those doing harm to our communities."

NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill said, "These narcotics traffickers operated an organized criminal network through which major quantities of illicit and potentially deadly drugs infected the streets of the Bronx during a period in which opioid-related deaths have been reaching epidemic levels. Through major cases like this one, the NYPD, along with our law enforcement and prosecution partners, continues to focus on the source and supply of illegal drugs and together we are committed to bring these criminals to justice."

Homeland Security Investigations New York Special Agent in Charge Angel M. Melendez said, "These individuals are alleged to have trafficked large quantities of highly addictive drugs through our local communities and into our surrounding states. Our neighborhoods have been plagued with opioid addictions, and we will continue joint law

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enforcement efforts with the NYPD in order to rid our streets of the dealers and traffickers of these deadly drugs.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendants are variously charged with first, second and third-degree Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance; first, second and third-degree Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance; second and fourth-degree Conspiracy; and other related charges. Defendants Mario Martinez and Joan Velez are charged with Operating as a Major Trafficker. They face a maximum of 25 years to life in prison if convicted of that charge.

Eleven defendants were arrested in a takedown on December 20, 2017 and were arraigned before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Robert Neary. They are due back in court on March 28, 2018. One defendant is awaiting extradition from Connecticut.

According to the 12-month wiretap investigation by the Bronx DA’s Special Investigations Bureau and Criminal Enterprise Bureau along with the NYPD Bronx Gang Squad and Homeland Security Investigations, defendants Mario Martinez and Joan Velez worked together to obtain and distribute narcotics. The defendants resold the narcotics throughout the Bronx and New York State, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Several of the defendants allegedly sold drugs along West Burnside Avenue in the 46th Precinct.

During the investigation, authorities seized over 10 kilograms of heroin, packaged in bricks and thousands of glassines, as well as various quantities of cocaine and crack-cocaine, \$20,000 in cash and three firearms.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Tara Diener and Jared Nardilla of the Criminal Enterprise Bureau, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney William Tock of the Narcotics Bureau, under the supervision of Howard Feldberg, Supervisor in the Special Investigations Bureau and Tarek Rahman, Chief of the Special Investigations Bureau, and the overall supervision of Stuart Levy, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division and Jean Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division.

District Attorney Clark thanked the NYPD’s Bronx DA Squad, the NYPD Bronx Gang Squad, the 48th Precinct, Homeland Security Investigations Violent Gang Unit, Connecticut

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State Police and the Connecticut Department of Probation for their assistance in the case.

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

Defendants

Mario Martinez, 46, Bronx
Joan Velez, 36, Bronx
Franky Skinner AKA Row, 48, Bronx
Johnnie Wright AKA Jimmy, 36, Ulster County, NY
Ramon Bonilla AKA Baldy, 52, Bronx
Luis Raposo AKA Luisito, 50, Bronx
David Hemphill AKA Dolla, 40, Bronx
Alexis Sanchez AKA Butter, 39, Bronx
Michael Collins AKA Mike, 29, Bronx
Christian Sanchez AKA Bori, 32, Manhattan
Emmanuel Gomez AKA Pistola, 35, Bronx
Yessenia Castro AKA La Yii, 33, Bronx
Francisco Brito, 38, Bronx
Randy Minaya, 30, Bronx
Miguel Robles, 36, Bronx
Michael Gallardo AKA Mike, 39, Bronx
Victor Lora, 24, Westchester County, NY
Leo Bonilla, 34, Bronx
Robert Porras AKA Robo, 39, Manhattan
Stephen Carrasco AKA Smurf, 42, Bronx
Desjohn Curry, 28, Bronx