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**UNITED STATES CHARGES 53 MEMBERS OF
BRONX HEROIN AND CRACK COCAINE TRAFFICKING RINGS**

*Coordinated Multi-Agency Law Enforcement Strike In
"Operation Rotten Apple" Shuts Down Vast Drug Operations In
Two Public Housing Projects In The Bronx*

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, RAY W. KELLY, the Commissioner of the Police Department for the City of New York ("NYPD"), RONALD B. TURK, the Special-Agent-in-Charge of the New York Division of the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives ("ATF"), JOHN P. GILBRIDE, the Special-Agent-in-Charge of the New York Division of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner for the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), and JOHN B. RHEA, the Chairman of the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA"), announced today the unsealing of six indictments charging 53 members of heroin and crack cocaine trafficking rings in the Morrisania Section of the Bronx. During a long-term proactive investigation dubbed "Operation Rotten Apple," federal and local law enforcement officers working with the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's Office used confidential informants, undercover officers, and federal wiretaps to infiltrate drug trafficking crews that controlled the distribution of heroin and crack

cocaine in and around the Melrose and Andrew Jackson public housing projects.

In a coordinated strike earlier today, 450 officers and agents from the NYPD, ATF, DEA, and the United States Marshals Service, supported by DOI, arrested 37 defendants. Three defendants are already in custody on unrelated charges. The rest of the defendants are still being sought. The defendants taken into custody today are expected to be presented in Manhattan federal court later this afternoon.

In connection with these arrests, federal and local law enforcement officers also executed court-authorized search warrants on 22 locations tied to many of the named defendants. During the arrests and searches, agents and officers seized, among other evidence: four firearms, \$18,000 in cash, and 1000 glassines of heroin.

The Indictments

The allegations contained in the six Indictments announced today are described in greater detail below. The charges against each defendant and the corresponding maximum potential penalties are contained in charts attached to this press release.

United States v. Johnnie Weaver et al. (09 Cr. 1056)

This Indictment charges 39 individuals for their participation in a heroin trafficking conspiracy based in the Melrose public housing project (the "Melrose Houses"). Specifically, the Courtlandt Avenue Organization led by JOHNNIE WEAVER and DWAYNE HENRY controlled the distribution and sale of heroin in the Melrose Houses, which are located on three city blocks between East 153rd and 156th Streets, bordered on the west by Morris Avenue and on the east by Courtlandt Avenue, and are home to nearly 2,500 residents living in eight residential buildings.

According to the Indictment, the Courtlandt Avenue Organization sold heroin in the Melrose Houses primarily to customers in "glassine" bags, costing \$10 each, which were stamped with "brand" names, signifying that the heroin was supplied by the organization. Some of the brand names used by the Cortland Avenue Organization were "American Gangster," "Magic," and "Poison." WEAVER and HENRY employed a large group of men and women to distribute the heroin at different locations in Melrose Houses. Those employees included "pitchers," who made

hand-to-hand sales of heroin to customers; "managers," who collected money from pitchers, resupplied them with narcotics, and provided narcotics proceeds to WEAVER and HENRY; and individuals who controlled and maintained "stash" apartments where the heroin was stored. It was understood in the Melrose Houses that WEAVER and HENRY had exclusive rights to distribute heroin in that community, and that no one outside of the Courtlandt Avenue Organization had permission to sell there, or to distribute any heroin other than the brands "owned" by WEAVER and HENRY. At the direction of WEAVER and HENRY, members of the Courtlandt Avenue Organization were at times involved in protecting the organization's exclusive drug dealing "turf," and ensuring that no rivals encroached on it.

During the course of the investigation, NYPD officers made more than 30 undercover purchases of heroin from members of the Courtland Avenue Organization at various locations throughout the Melrose Houses. Federal agents also obtained court orders to wiretap the telephones of WEAVER and HENRY, and the resulting evidence included hundreds of incriminating conversations between and among the members of the Courtlandt Avenue Organization, discussing narcotics transactions and other illicit activities. The telephone conversations also referenced potential acts of violence, including discussions about purchasing a nine-millimeter firearm, possessing numerous .38-caliber pistols for use against a rival group, and hiring two individuals to assault a member of the Cortland Avenue Organization in order to discipline him.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY III.

United States v. Tyrone Barnes (09 Cr. 1053)

This Indictment charges TYRONE BARNES with controlling a heroin trafficking ring in the Andrew Jackson public housing project (the "Jackson Houses") for the last 14 years, from 1995 through the present. The Jackson Houses are directly north of the Melrose Houses, located between East 156th and 158th Streets, bordered on the west by Park Avenue, and on the east by Courtlandt Avenue, and are home to nearly 2,500 residents living in seven buildings. Similar to WEAVER and HENRY, BARNES employed pitchers and managers to distribute his heroin, which was packaged in glassine bags bearing stamps such as "Scorpion."

BARNES is also charged with possession of heroin in conjunction with an arrest by NYPD officers on October 14, 2009, in the vicinity of 165th Street and Grand Concourse in the Bronx,

in which WEAVER was found in possession of approximately 400 glassines of heroin that were packaged for distribution.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN.

United States v. Ronny Gonzalez (09 Cr. 1054)

The Indictment charges eight individuals with participating in a conspiracy to distribute, and to possess with intent to distribute, more than 50 grams of crack cocaine. This crew operated in the vicinity of 153rd and 154th Street and Courtlandt Avenue, adjacent to the Melrose Houses.

During the course of the investigation, undercover officers made approximately 30 undercover purchases of crack cocaine from members of the GONZALEZ crew. Two of the members of the GONZALEZ crew, ALICIA LUGO and JAMARRA HEMPHILL, are also charged as being members of the Courtlandt Avenue Organization in United States v. Weaver.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge SHIRA A. SCHEINDLIN.

United States v. Flor Forte (09 Cr. 1055)

This Indictment charges five individuals with operating a conspiracy to distribute, and to possess with intent to distribute, more than 50 grams of crack cocaine. This crew operated out of 285 East 156th Street, one of the apartment buildings directly inside of the Jackson Houses.

During the course of the investigation, NYPD officers made approximately 24 undercover purchases of crack cocaine from members of the crew.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge ALVIN. K. HELLERSTEIN.

United States v. Markell Cruz (09 Cr. 1051) and
United States v. Jason Horsford (09 Cr. 1052)

Two Indictments charge MARKELL CRUZ and JASON HORSFORD with distributing and possessing with intent to distribute crack cocaine on multiple different occasions.

Specifically, based on sales of crack cocaine CRUZ made to NYPD undercover officers, CRUZ is charged with distributing

and possessing with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack on September 20, 2005, and distributing and possessing with intent to distribute more than five grams on crack on September 9 and 14, 2005. HORSFORD is charged with distributing and possessing with intent to distribute a quantity of crack following his arrest on August 12, 2009, based on his sale of crack cocaine to an undercover officer on the grounds of the Melrose Houses.

The case is assigned to United States District Judge SIDNEY H. STEIN for U.S. v. Cruz and United States District Judge LEWIS A. KAPLAN for U.S. v. Horsford.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the NYPD, the ATF, the DEA, DOI, NYCHA, the United States Marshals Service, the New York State Department of Parole, and the New York State Department of Probation. He added that the investigation is continuing.

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, said: "For too long, these narcotics rings have operated as virtual drug monopolies in the Bronx. Today, we have put them out of business. Families in this City have the right to live in neighborhoods free from the poison of drugs and the violence that inevitably accompanies it. That is the right we protect today."

RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Commissioner of the NYPD, said: "This was an important blow against narcotics trafficking and its inevitable ties to violence and the misery of addiction. One of our goals in crushing its operations inside public housing was to improve the lives and personal safety of the its law-abiding residents."

RONALD B. TURK, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Division of ATF, said: "Today's arrests affirm ATF's commitment to making our neighborhoods safer. Targeting and arresting armed violent gang members remains one of our top priorities and we, along with our partners, will continue this fight. Over the past 18 months, we have identified and targeted several out-of-state gun suppliers of this gang and will continue to combat illegal firearms trafficking into our city."

JOHN P. GILBRIDE, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Division of the DEA, said: "Operation Rotten Apple" exemplifies the relationship between drug trafficking and gang violence. Law enforcement came together in order to use the highest level of prosecution and investigation to ultimately weed

out the drug traffickers at the Jackson/Melrose Housing Developments so that the community can live without fear of violence and drug trafficking."

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner for DOI, said: "Today's takedown is a significant step in law enforcement's continuing effort to root out criminal activity from the City housing developments. Improving residents' safety and stemming corruption is of major importance to DOI and we were pleased to offer support and assistance on this operation."

JOHN B. RHEA, Chairman of the New York City Housing Authority, said: "Today's joint action sends out a strong message that drugs will not be tolerated in public housing. We will continue to work with our partners at the NYPD Housing Bureau, DOI, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and our residents to identify where problems exist and to remove drugs and the people who traffic in them from our buildings."

The prosecution of the cases arising from "Operation Rotten Apple" is being overseen by the Office's Violent Crimes Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys MARGARET GARNETT and NOLA B. HELLER are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictments are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

09-357

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U.S. v. Johnnie Weaver, et al. (09 Cr. 1056)

Ct	Charge	Defendants	Maximum Penalties
1	Conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute one kilogram of heroin and more	JOHNNIE WEAVER, DWAYNE HENRY, EMANUEL GRAY, DAVID CROSBY, HOWARD RONALD HOLLINGSWORTH, MARVIN WILLIAMS, JOHN REAPE, VICTOR OZUNA, DASHAWN HARGROVE, DARNELL WAITERS, SHARIF DAVIS, JAMEL ROBERTSON, FRED BROWN, NEVILLE HORSFORD, KEVIN MARTINEZ, RAYMOND WAXTER, MARK MELENDEZ, JAMES RIDDLES, JR., ANTHONY MARTIN, ARTURO DIAZ, FNU LNU, ALTON MAGGETTE, ALICIA LUGO, JAMARRA HEMPHILL, PHYLLISE JOHNSON, DESHELL DILLIGARD, CLARENCE COBO, JOSEPH COSTELLO, SHATICHA COSTELLO, PATRICIA PILOT, JUAN DIAZ, JAMES DAILY, JAIRO ELIGIO, LUIS BONILLA, JOSE CORUJO	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison
2	Conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute one kilogram of heroin and more	JOHNNIE WEAVER, JOHN RODRIGUEZ, LATACIA WILLIAMS JACOBS, MONIQUE GONZALEZ, RONALD BROOKS	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison

Defendant	Residence
JOHNNIE WEAVER	Bronx, New York
DWAYNE HENRY	Bronx, New York
EMANUEL GRAY	Bronx, New York
DAVID CROSBY	Bronx, New York
HOWARD RONALD HOLLINGSWORTH	Bronx, New York
MARVIN WILLIAMS	Bronx, New York
JOHN REAPE	Bronx, New York
VICTOR OZUNA	Bronx, New York
DASHAWN HARGROVE	Bronx, New York
DARNELL WAITERS	Bronx, New York
SHARIF DAVIS	Bronx, New York
JAMEL ROBERTSON	Bronx, New York
FRED BROWN	Bronx, New York
NEVILLE HORSFORD	Bronx, New York
KEVIN MARTINEZ	Bronx, New York
RAYMOND WAXTER	Bronx, New York
MARK MELENDEZ	Bronx, New York
JAMES RIDDLES, JR.,	Bronx, New York
ANTHONY MARTIN	Bronx, New York
ARTURO DIAZ	Bronx, New York
FNU LNU	Bronx, New York
ALTON MAGGETTE	Bronx, New York
ALICIA LUGO	Bronx, New York
JAMARRA HEMPHILL	Bronx, New York
PHYLLISE JOHNSON	Bronx, New York
DESHEIL DILLIGARD	Bronx, New York
CLARENCE COBO	Bronx, New York

JOSEPH COSTELLO, SR.	Bronx, New York
SHATICA COSTELLA	Bronx, New York
PATRICIA PILOT	Bronx, New York
JUAN DIAZ	Bronx, New York
JAMES DAILY	Bronx, New York
JAIRO ELIGIO	Bronx, New York
LUIS BONILLA	Bronx, New York
JOSE CORUJO	Bronx, New York
JOHN RODRIGUEZ	Bronx, New York
LATACIA WILLIAMS JACOBS	Bronx, New York
MONIQUE GONZALEZ	Bronx, New York
RONALD BROOKS	Bronx, New York

U.S. v. Tyrone Barnes (09 Cr. 1053)

Ct	Charge	Defendant	Maximum Penalties
1	Conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute one kilogram of heroin and more	TYRONE BARNES	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison
2	Distribution and possession with intent to distribute a quantity of heroin	TYRONE BARNES	20 years in prison

Defendant	Residence
TYRONE BARNES	Bronx, New York

U.S. v. Ronny Gonzalez, et al. (09 Cr.1054)

Ct	Charge	Defendants	Maximum Penalties
1	Conspiracy to distribute, and to possess with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine	RONNY GONZALEZ, NICHOLAS PRINGLE, DEQUAN HOPKINS, FRANK THOMAS, MARVIN LEWIS, ALICIA LUGO	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison
2	Conspiracy to distribute, and to possess with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine	ALICIA LUGO, JAMARRA HEMPHILL, JEANNETTE GARCIA	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison

Defendant	Residence
RONNY GONZALEZ	Bronx, New York
NICHOLAS PRINGLE	Bronx, New York
DEQUAN HOPKINS	Bronx, New York
FRANK THOMAS	Bronx, New York
MARVIN LEWIS	Bronx, New York
ALICIA LUGO	Bronx, New York
JAMARRA HEMPHILL	Bronx, New York
JEANNETTE GARCIA	Bronx, New York

U.S. v. Flor Forte, et al. (09 Cr. 1055)

Ct	Charge	Defendants	Maximum Penalties
1	Conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 50 grams and more of crack cocaine	FLOR FORTE, JUAN SORIANO, HARRY MENDOZA, JOE COLON, FNU LNU	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison

Defendant	Residence
FLOR FORTE	Bronx, New York
JUAN SORIANO	Bronx, New York
HARRY MENDOZA	Bronx, New York
JOE COLON	Bronx, New York
FNU LNU	Bronx, New York

U.S. v. Markell Cruz (09 Cr. 1051)

Ct	Charge	Defendant	Maximum Penalties
1	Distribution and possession with intent to distribute 50 grams and more of crack cocaine	MARKELL CRUZ	Maximum term of life in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison
2	Distribution and possession with intent to distribute 5 grams and more of crack cocaine	MARKELL CRUZ	40 years in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 5 in prison

3	Distribution and possession with intent to distribute 5 grams and more of crack cocaine	MARKELL CRUZ	40 years in prison and a mandatory minimum term of 5 in prison
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Defendant	Residence
MARKELL CRUZ	Bronx, New York

U.S. v. Jason Horsford (09 Cr. 1052)

Ct	Charge	Defendant	Maximum Penalties
1	Distribution and possession with intent to distribute a quantity of crack cocaine	JASON HORSFORD	20 years in prison

Defendant	Residence
JASON HORSFORD	Bronx, New York