



DISTRICT ATTORNEY
QUEENS COUNTY
125-01 QUEENS BOULEVARD
KEW GARDENS, NEW YORK 11415-1568
718-286-6000

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RICHARD A. BROWN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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CONTACT: QDA PRESS OFFICE
718-286-6315

MEMBERS OF \$13 MILLION SPORTS BETTING RING ARRAIGNED ON CHARGES

\$1.3 Million Worth of Cash and Property Seized in New York and North Carolina

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by New York State Police Superintendent Harry J. Corbitt, today announced that nine of the eleven individuals indicted for unlawfully operating a sports betting enterprise in Queens County that took in an estimated \$13 million over a 19-month period by accepting wagers on various sporting events – including professional and college football, basketball, hockey and baseball – have been arraigned in State Supreme Court. Of the two remaining defendants, one is facing extradition from North Carolina and the other is a fugitive believed to be in Costa Rica where the ring's alleged wire room was located.

District Attorney Brown said, "Illegal sports betting is an incredibly lucrative cash cow for those involved in the operation, allowing them to secrete and launder untold millions of dollars in unlawfully earned proceeds through legitimate enterprises. In one instance, a defendant is alleged to have paid nearly \$50,000 in cash for a high-end luxury automobile. In another, over \$200,000 in cash was found tucked away with the Christmas decorations."

The District Attorney added, "It is alleged that the criminal enterprise in this case handled – on average – illegal betting action of more than \$680,000 a week totaling about \$13 million over the 19-month span covered by the indictment."

District Attorney Brown said that the nine defendants were arraigned yesterday before Acting Queens Supreme Court Justice James P. Griffin on an 86-count indictment charging each of them with enterprise corruption, a Class B felony punishable by up to 25 years in prison. The defendants were also variously charged with first-degree promoting gambling, third-degree money laundering and fifth-degree conspiracy. The top two defendants – Michael Mildenberger and James Rossi – were each ordered held on \$75,000 bail (with a bail sufficiency hearing). The other seven defendants were each ordered held on \$5,000 bail. The case was adjourned to September 2, 2009.

District Attorney Brown noted that the tenth defendant, William Jennings, of Calabash, North Carolina, has not waived extradition and is being held in lieu of \$1 million bail in North Carolina.

In addition to those arrested, seven search warrants were executed in New York and North Carolina, resulting in the seizure of more than \$1 million in cash and five automobiles, including four high-end luxury vehicles with an estimated value of \$160,000, and the recovery of thousands of pages of gambling records.

(MORE)

The investigation and arrests were the result of a joint investigation between the Queens District Attorney's Rackets and Organized Crime Bureau and the New York State Police. The investigation began in July 2007 when information about an illegal sports betting operation was uncovered. The investigation included physical surveillance, intelligence information and court-authorized electronic eavesdropping.

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the indictment, between September 25, 2007 and April 10, 2009, the defendants conspired to make money illegally through the operation of an unlawful gambling enterprise that accepted bets, via an offshore wire room, on sporting events ranging from as little as \$200 to as much as \$4,000 on a single game.

The investigation was primarily conducted by the New York State Police, Troop "NYC" of the District Attorney's Squad, and the District Attorney's Detective Bureau.

The United States Postal Inspector's Office assisted in the investigation, as did the North Carolina Bureau of Investigations and the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department in North Carolina.

Assistant District Attorneys Christine M. Maloney and Brian E. Kohm of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau are prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief and Mark L. Katz, Deputy Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda M. Cantoni.

Assistant District Attorney David S. Zadnoff, of the District Attorney's Special Proceedings Bureau, has filed a \$13 million asset forfeiture lawsuit against the defendants.

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

Note to Editors: E-version of this press release posted at www.queensda.org.

CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS

BOOKMAKERS

Michael Mildenberger, 71, 4 Green Ash Street, Baiting Hollow, NY.
James A. Rossi, 49, 69 Salamander Court, Staten Island, NY.

CONTROLLER

Carmen V. Cicalese, 77, 467 Longhill Drive, Short Hill, NJ. (Not in custody)

AGENTS

Anthony Acierno, 50, 118 Amsterdam Avenue, Staten Island, NY.
Michael M. D'Angelo, 37, Whisper Lane, Wantagh, NY.
Peter P. D'Angelo, 33, 72 Anchor Lane, Levittown, NY.
William E. Jennings, 55, 1380 N. Middleton Drive, NW, Calabash, NC.
Robert E. Degiacomi, 28, 70 Sommer Avenue, Staten Island, NY.
John J. Marino, 31, 330 East 63rd Street, Apt. 5D, New York, NY.
Gene Panariello, 74, 557 Central Avenue, Apt. 9B, Cedarhurst, NY.
Joseph R. Sofia, 63, address withheld.