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Release # 144-2009
www.queensda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2009

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**ELEVEN INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING RETIRED POLICE OFFICER,
INDICTED IN \$13 MILLION SPORTS BETTING RING**

*Charged With Enterprise Corruption, Promoting Gambling and Money Laundering
Almost \$400,000 Cash Seized*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by New York State Police Superintendent Harry J. Corbitt, today announced the indictment of eleven individuals on charges of unlawfully operating a sports betting enterprise in Queens County that took in \$13 million over a 19-month period by accepting wagers on various sporting events, including professional and college football, basketball, hockey and baseball. Ten of the defendants were arrested this morning and are awaiting arraignment in Queens Supreme Court. One defendant is a fugitive at this time and believed to be in Costa Rica. They each face up to 25 years in prison if convicted.

District Attorney Brown said, "Illegal sports betting reaps millions of dollars in cash profits that are easily diverted to more insidious criminal enterprises. These are not victimless crimes. In fact, participants often use threats, intimidation and even physical force to collect debts. Today's indictments will send a clear signal that when it comes to illegal gambling in Queens County, all bets are off."

New York State Police Superintendent Corbitt said, "The indictments resulting from this collaborative investigation are evidence that we are serious about pursuing illegal gambling operations and will bring their ringleaders to justice."

District Attorney Brown said that, according to an 86-count indictment filed in Queens County Supreme Court, the gambling ring promoted illegal sports betting in Queens County and elsewhere. The top two defendants – Michael Mildenerger, 71, and James Rossi, 49, a reputed Genovese crime family associate – are alleged to be co-bookmakers of the operation. It is alleged that they used an offshore wireroom located in Costa Rica which was accessible through a toll free telephone number and the website www.perfectwager.com. All of the defendants are charged with enterprise corruption. In addition, they are variously charged with first-degree promoting gambling, third-degree money laundering and fifth-degree conspiracy.

Included among the defendants is Joseph R. Sofia, 63, who is a retired New York City police officer. It is alleged that Sofia acted as an "agent" who gave bettors access codes, collected payments and set limits on the amount they were allowed to bet.

District Attorney Brown said that the investigation leading to today's indictment began in July 2007 when the New York State Police and the Queens County District Attorney's Rackets and Organized Crime Bureau developed information about an illegal sports betting operation. The investigation included physical surveillance, intelligence information and court-authorized electronic eavesdropping.

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. Investigators who executed search warrants this morning recovered \$210,100 from a safe at the North Carolina home of one of the defendants, William Jennings. The safe was found in a box of Christmas decorations. Investigators also executed a search warrant of a safe deposit box in Jennings' name at the Bank of Smithtown in Huntington, L.I., and seized \$160,000 cash. Another \$11,000 in cash was recovered at the home of James Rossi's father, which the defendant is known to use. Also, four vehicles were seized, including a 2006 Mercedes Benz 500, a 2008 Lincoln Navigator and a 2009 Lincoln MKS, all from defendant Mildenerger. A 2002 Mercury Sable was seized from defendant Gene Panariello. In addition, thousands of pages of

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gambling records were recovered.

The investigation was conducted by the New York State Police, Troop "NYC" of the District Attorney's Squad, under the supervision of Troop NYC Commander Michael Kopy, Captain William Baker, Lieutenant John Ryan III and QDA Squad Senior Investigator J.M. Cruz. Troop Investigators who also conducted the investigation include Simon A. Ocampo, David S. Douglas, Leslie A. Harrington, Darrel G. Foster, Christopher E. Fox, Ralph A. Rodriguez, Donald Coffey, Jeremy Harrison, John Afalla, Orlando Rodriguez, Marcos J. Trujillo, Eric J. Reed, Vincent Notaro, Eric J. Tyson, James Manigault, Emille B. Rajnarain, and Trooper Scott Enser.

Detective Alan S. Schwartz and Lieutenant Franco Russo, of the District Attorney's Detective Bureau, assisted in the investigation under the supervision of Chief Lawrence J. Festa and Deputy Chief Albert D. Velardi. Forensic accountant James Dever, of the District Attorney's Economic Crimes Bureau, also assisted in the investigation.

United States Postal Inspector Eric Fusaro, of 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 Hills, 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.