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ELEVEN INDIVIDUALS INDICTED IN \$6 MILLION SPORTS BETTING RING
Charged With Enterprise Corruption and Promoting Gambling

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by 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 \$6.0 million over a 10-month period by accepting wagers on various sporting events including horse-racing and professional and college football, basketball, hockey and baseball. Nine local defendants were arrested this morning and are awaiting arraignment in Queens Supreme Court. Two others were arrested in Texas. 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. Oftentimes, these operations are run by individuals who have no qualms about using threats, intimidation and physical force to collect on debts owed to them. 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 a 19-count indictment filed in Queens County Supreme Court the gambling ring promoted illegal sports betting in Queens County, and that the top two defendants – Dennis Cermak, 54, and Donald Abo, 50 – ran a large part of the business out of their homes in Whitestone, as well as out of a wire room located in the Bronx. All of the defendants are charged with enterprise corruption, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

District Attorney Brown said that the investigation leading to today's indictment began in September 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 January 17, 2008, and November 17, 2008, the defendants conspired to make money illegally through the operation of an unlawful gambling enterprise that accepted bets on sporting events ranging from as little as \$30 to as much as \$1,000 on a single game. Investigators executed search warrants and recovered miscellaneous gambling records at Cermak's house; gambling records and a tape recorder located next to the telephone were

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recovered from Abo's house, and gambling records, tape recorders, and cassette tapes containing betting calls were recovered from the Bronx wire room.

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

Assistant District Attorney Christopher E. Barnett of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau is 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.

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

BOOKMAKER

Dennis Cermak, 54, of 141-55 19th Avenue, Whitestone, NY.

CONTROLLER

Donald Abo, 50, 154-61 20th Avenue, 1st floor, Whitestone, NY.

MONEY COLLECTOR

Robert Corby, 58, 66-10 Saunders Street, Rego Park, NY.

AGENTS

James Farnochi, 61, 29-31 159th Street, Flushing, NY.

Michael Lauria, 65, 138-08 56th Avenue, Flushing, NY.

Christopher Mallon, 43, 188 Wellington Road, Mineola, NY.

Michael Parente, 53, 30 Laveview Avenue, Lynbrook, NY.

William Rankel, 54, 61-81 79th Street, Middle Village, NY.

Jeffrey Richards, 62, 1669 Cortelyou Road, Merrick, NY.

James Morales, 53, 7822 Fairacres Street, Houston, TX.

Marc Levy, 48, 16 Bendwood Drive, Sugar Land, TX.