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**THIRTY-EIGHT INDICTED – INCLUDING 3 CITY EMPLOYEES – IN \$178 MILLION
NATIONWIDE SPORTS GAMBLING OPERATIONS**

*Individuals Arrested in Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana and New York;
District Attorney Initiates \$178 Million Asset Forfeiture Case*

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by representatives of the New York City Police Department, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Broward County (Florida) Sheriff's Office, today announced that 38 individuals – including a New York City firefighter, a sanitation worker, and a highway repairman – have been indicted on charges of operating two highly sophisticated illegal sports gambling enterprises that stretched westward from Queens County to Nevada and as far south as Florida and Costa Rica.

District Attorney Brown said, "The defendants are accused of being involved in two distinct nationwide gambling rings that booked nearly \$178 million in wagers over a 32-month period on professional and college basketball and football, professional baseball and hockey and other sporting events. In carrying out their alleged gambling operations, the defendants used sports betting websites – which are literally computerized betting sheets accessible both online and via an "800" toll-free telephone number – thereby allowing them to manage numerous gambling accounts, out of which criminal proceeds were collected and distributed throughout the United States."

District Attorney Brown continued, "Such computerized wire rooms operate around the clock and can handle a large volume of bettors at any one time, thus allowing the organizers to increase their illicit profits without having to bother with the time-consuming record-keeping aspects of a more traditional, paper-based bookmaking operation. Unfortunately for the defendants, the law enforcement community is just as adept in using new technology to stop those involved in such criminal pursuits. Today's arrests close down two highly lucrative gambling operations and send a loud and clear message that law enforcement will keep up the pressure."

Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said, "Illegal gambling and money laundering are not victimless crimes. The proceeds from illegal sports betting are used to fuel organized crime and support harmful criminal enterprises. Because of today's arrests the very same illegal gambling outfit that had spread its reach from Queens to Nevada will now be confined to a significantly smaller space."

James T. Hayes, Jr., special agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in New York, said, "The seizures made by ICE today destroy the backbone of this criminal organization. We remain committed to working with law enforcement at every level to ensure there is no reward, or profit, for those individuals and organizations who seek to engage in systematic criminal activity as a business model."

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Broward County Sheriff Al Lamberti said, “This operation proves, once again, that crime has no borders and criminals have no boundaries. Unregulated, illegal gambling has a negative impact on society and it’s gratifying to know that our deputies and detectives helped build a solid case against these criminals.”

District Attorney Brown said that detectives assigned to the New York City Police Department’s Organized Crime Investigation Division, as well as federal agents throughout the country, arrested the defendants on charges of Enterprise Corruption – a violation of New York State’s Organized Crime Control Act – as well as Money Laundering, Promoting Gambling and Conspiracy. The defendants each face up to 25 years in prison, if convicted.

Two enterprise corruption indictments filed in Queens County Supreme Court charge that the gambling rings promoted illegal sports betting in Queens County and elsewhere and that the defendants were involved in non-traditional computerized wire rooms in Costa Rica. Eighteen of the defendants are also being sued civilly and have been named as respondents in a \$178 million civil forfeiture action filed in Queens Supreme Court by the District Attorney’s Special Proceedings Bureau, which alleges that they engaged in criminal enterprises that promoted illegal gambling activities and generated illegal wages.

District Attorney Brown said that the investigation leading to today’s arrests began in January 2007 when the NYPD’s Organized Crime Investigation Division, in conjunction with the Queens County District Attorney’s Office’s Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, developed information about two betting rings operating in Queens County and elsewhere. The investigation included physical surveillance, intelligence information and court-authorized electronic eavesdropping that intercepted hundreds of hours of incriminating conversations.

The enterprises allegedly handled thousands of wagers each month that generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in monthly gross revenue or approximately \$178 million between July 2007 and March 2010. It is alleged to have relied on modern technology to generate its criminal proceeds, including toll-free telephone numbers and five known gambling websites – www.crownsports.com; www.jazzsports.com; www.5dimes.com; www.bigonsports.com; and www.beteris.com – which, in effect, served as computerized wire rooms through which the enterprises conducted much of its illegal gambling activity.

District Attorney Brown said that law enforcement crackdowns over the years on traditional mob-run wire rooms have led to an increased use by illegal gambling rings of offshore gambling websites where action is available around the clock. Bettors can click on an offshore gambling website over the Internet and be assigned individual login codes and passwords. Bettors’ win-loss amounts are maintained by the websites, which charge bookmakers for the service. These gambling websites typically store their information on computer servers outside the United States – often in such Central American countries as Costa Rica – and “bounce” their data through a series of server nodes in efforts to evade law enforcement detection through traditional methods.

According to the first indictment (dubbed Crown Sports I), Robert Baselice was a bookmaker and, as such, one of the bosses of the enterprise who controlled and oversaw the entire operation and profited from each criminal pursuit by a member of the enterprise. Baselice allegedly ran his operation through the crownsports.com website and employed alleged “money collectors” Joseph Fredette and Michael Guarino to distribute, deliver and transfer gambling proceeds between members of the organization for him.

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Another alleged bookmaker who used the crownsports.com website was Charles Cicalo, who also allegedly utilized the jazzsports.com website. It is alleged that Cicalo employed a number of “super agents” – Anthony Vollaro, Nicholas Calabrese and his son, Joseph Calabrese, and Carmine Malara and his son, Frank Malara – who had several subordinate agents reporting directly to them and “agents” – Michael Labetti (a DOT employee), Emil Ganzerla, Matthew Fopeano (a FDNY employee) and Tito Grenga – who were allegedly responsible for soliciting new bettors to the organization, maintaining existing bettor relationships and meeting with bettors to collect gambling losses and payout winnings. Another of Cicalo’s super agents allegedly was Frank Rupolo, who lived in Florida and through whom Cicalo allegedly directed gambling proceeds from his organization to Gina Zelinka, an alleged money collector for Michael Flynn III, who is charged with serving as both a bookmaker and bank.

The indictment additionally alleges that Flynn, who operated through the betcris.com website, directed the flow of gambling proceeds in and around the United States via alleged money collectors/distributors – such as David Carazo who collected and distributed gambling proceeds for Flynn in Louisiana and surrounding states and Zelinka and Michael Baevitz, who collected and distributed large amount of gambling proceeds for Flynn in Florida, including to other alleged money collectors – such as Guillermo Canales, Marcel Grasso and Nicholas Coon. Super agents allegedly employed by Flynn included Drew Casen and Harry Tudor who were also partners. Casen operated in Las Vegas and Tudor operated in Florida. They also allegedly operated under Josef Monro, a super agent living in Michigan.

It is further alleged that Flynn often transferred accounts from website to website to accommodate bookkeepers and agents who utilized the websites, while charging them a percentage for the transfers.

According to the second indictment (dubbed Crown Sports II), Robert Ackrish, a sanitation worker, and his father, Lewis Ackrish, were bookmakers and partners who utilized the crownsports.com website, along with their super agents, – Frank Sapienza, Walter Ghirlando, John Campbell and agents – Wen Han Chen, Vincent Messina, Robert McAllister, Francis Stanford, Frank Campanello. George Beglin and Ralph Bauer were allegedly money collectors.

In addition to the criminal charges, more than a dozen search warrants were executed in New York, Florida, Nevada, Louisiana and Michigan, which resulted in the seizure of cash and millions of dollars in real and personal property.

District Attorney Brown expressed his appreciation to the New York City Police Department’s Organized Crime Investigation Division; the Broward County (Florida) Sheriff’s Office; the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Offices of Investigations in New York and Louisiana; the Offices of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, the Eastern District of Louisiana and the District of Nevada; the Nevada Gaming Commission; the Miami-Dade Police Department; the Miami Office of the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigation Division; and the Maricopa County (Arizona) Sheriff’s Office for their assistance and cooperation during the course of the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by Detectives Gerard McNally, Joseph Chimienti, Luis Flores and other members of the New York City Police Department’s Organized Crime Investigation Division Headquarters One Team under the supervision of Lieutenant Jack Iacovou, Captain John Dusanenko and Inspector Brian O’Neill, and under the overall supervision of Chief Anthony Izzo of the Organized Crime Control Bureau.

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Assistant District Attorney Nicole D. Sharples, of the District Attorney's Organized Crime and Rackets Bureau, is prosecuting the case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief, and Mark L. Katz, Deputy Bureau 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.

The civil action is being litigated by Assistant District Attorneys David S. Zadnoff and Andrew H. Kaufman of the District Attorney's Special Proceedings Bureau under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Anthony M. Communiello, Bureau Chief, and Oscar W. Ruiz, Deputy Bureau Chief, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney Cantoni.

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

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CROWN SPORTS I DEFENDANTS AND THEIR ALLEGED ROLES (26)

* named as respondent in civil forfeiture action

BOOKMAKER/BANK (1)

Michael Flynn III (a.k.a. Mickey Richardson), 39, is believed to be in Costa Rica in Central America. His last known U.S. address is 689 East Beau Street in Washington, Pennsylvania.

BOOKMAKERS (2)

Robert J. Baselice, 38, of 400 Bradford Avenue in Staten Island, New York. *
Charles L. Cicalo, 49, of 31 Oakley Place in Staten Island, New York. *

MONEY COLLECTORS/DISTRIBUTORS (9)

Mitchell Baevitz, 54, of 13 Crossing Circle in Boynton Beach, Florida.
David E. Carazo, 41, of 10142 Walden Drive in River Ridge, Louisiana.
Guillermo R. Carnales, 59, of 401 Warren Lane in Key Biscayne, Florida.
Nicholas R. Coon, 41, of 1118 Bel Air Drive in Highland Beach, Florida.
Joseph Fredette, 44, of 185 Prospect Avenue in Hackensack, New Jersey.
Marcel J. Grasso, 62, of 12093 Colony Preserve Drive in Boynton Beach, Florida.
Michael F. Guarino, 45, of 190 Fairmount Avenue in Hackensack, New Jersey.
Lance J. Matias, 40, of 325 Southeast Verada Avenue in Port St. Lucie, Florida.
Gina C. Zelinka, 54, of 8070 Northwest 45 Street in Lauderhill, Florida.

SUPER AGENTS (9)

Joseph F. Calabrese, 42, of 212 Bedell Avenue in Staten Island, New York. *
Nicholas L. Calabrese, 72, of 42 Plymouth Road in Staten Island, New York. *
Drew Casen, 59, of 2466 Green Mountain Court in Las Vegas, Nevada.
Carmine F. Malara, 60, of 197 Chelsea Street in Staten Island, New York. *
Frank J. Malara, 31, of 4796 Hylan Boulevard in Staten Island, New York. *
Josef Monro, 62, of 20705 Breezewood Court in Beverly Hills, Michigan.
Frank G. Rupolo, 48, of 10341 Majestic Court, Parkland, Florida.
Harry H. Tudor, 48, of 7480 Southwest 93 Avenue in Miami, Florida.
Anthony Vollaro, 72, of 19817 Gulf Boulevard in Indian Shores, Florida. *

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AGENTS (5)

Matthew C. Fopeano, 38, of 6 Briggs Avenue in Monroe Township, New Jersey. Fopeano is a FDNY employee.

Emil Ganzerla, 55, of 59-43 50th Avenue in Woodside, New York. *

Tito Grenga, 70, of 7 Severin Court in Cranford, New Jersey.

Michael A. Labetti, 46, of 36 Sally Street in Howell, New Jersey. Labetti is a DOT employee

Wayne M. Murray, 62, of 2815 Northeast 201 Terrace in Miami, Florida.

CROWN SPORTS II

DEFENDANTS AND THEIR ALLEGED ROLES (12)

* named as respondent in civil forfeiture action

BOOKMAKERS (2)

Lewis M. Ackrish, 66, of 16 Crossfield Avenue in Staten Island, New York. *

Robert E. Ackrish, 31, of 48 Thomas Street in Staten Island, New York. Ackrish is a DOS employee. *

MONEY COLLECTORS/DISTRIBUTORS (2)

Ralph E. Bauer, 63, of 94 Cedar Drive in Miller Place, New York. *

George W. Beglin, Jr., 61, of 8 Mark Court in Glen Cove, New York. *

SUPER AGENTS (3)

John D. Campbell, 59, of 153 Violet Avenue in Floral Park, New York. *

Walter G. Ghirlando, 68, of 1425 South Tenaya Way in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Frank J. Sapienza, 56, of 78 Ramona Avenue in Staten Island, New York. *

AGENTS (5)

Frank Campanello, Jr., 72, of 8576 East Via DeDorado in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Wen Han Chen, 36, of 2024 64th Street in Brooklyn, New York. *

Robert J. McAllister, 47, of 7102 18th Avenue in Brooklyn, New York. *

Vincent A. Messina, 47, of 48 Thomas Street in Staten Island, New York. *

Francis M. Stanford, 31, of 23 Oakdale Street in Staten Island, New York. *