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**SEVENTEEN INDIVIDUALS IN NEW YORK AND TWO WESTERN STATES INDICTED
BY QUEENS COUNTY GRAND JURY IN ILLEGAL \$32 MILLION SPORTS BETTING RING**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by Robert L. Capers, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Diego Rodriguez, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton, today announced that a Queens County grand jury has indicted 17 individuals in New York, Nevada and California on charges of unlawfully operating a highly sophisticated sports gambling enterprise that stretched westward from Queens County and utilized offshore-based gambling websites. The enterprise, which is alleged to have annually booked more than \$32 million in bets, is also accused of laundering its criminal proceeds by depositing and withdrawing large sums of cash from various banks throughout the United States.

The defendants are charged in a 126-count indictment with enterprise corruption – a violation of New York State’s Organized Crime Control Act – as well as money laundering, promoting gambling and conspiracy. Fourteen of the defendants are in custody, including three local defendants who are awaiting arraignment in Queens County Supreme Court. Three defendants are still being sought. If convicted, the defendants each face up to 25 years in prison.

“Internet gambling is a multi-billion dollar worldwide industry. It is highly sophisticated and extremely lucrative handling wagers on a wide variety of sports events, ranging from horse racing, football, baseball, basketball and hockey to NASCAR, PGA gold and professional tennis, among others,” said District Attorney Brown. “Over the last few years – working with our federal, state and local law enforcement colleagues – we have taken down a number of these operations and put them out of business. These cases, I believe, have put a significant dent in illegal gambling nationwide – and have saved individuals across the country millions of dollars in gambling losses.”

District Attorney Brown continued, “There are some who would argue that Internet gambling is a victimless crime. I very much disagree. Internet gambling has been compared by some to the crack cocaine epidemic of the late ’80s and early ’90s. It is highly addictive and easy to get hooked. It has been said of Internet gambling that you simply ‘click the mouse and lose your house.’ Once you start, you cannot stop. For example, it is estimated that more than ten percent of college students are online gambling, and that more than one million young people currently are using Internet gambling sites on a monthly basis and that the number of college students who are gambling online once a week has quadrupled in recent years.”

U.S. Attorney Capers said, “The arrests and seizures today represent a coordinated effort to address

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illegal sports wagering over the Internet. With this seizure of millions of dollars from the Cryus Irani operation, our asset forfeiture unit stands united with our law enforcement partners in rooting out the profits from illegal sports gambling.”

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Rodriquez said, “This case is a great example of a collaborative approach by the government to tackle a criminal problem. As alleged, Cyrus Irani ran an extensive offshore internet gambling ring. The FBI, in coordination with our local partners, have carried out search warrants and seizures of alleged profits from this online gambling ring.”

Commissioner Bratton said, “This investigation demonstrates how formidable the NYPD’s law enforcement partnerships are, facilitating the takedown of a cross-country Internet betting ring that stretches through Nevada and California. The suspects in this case mistakenly believed this scheme would remain hidden by the anonymity of the Internet and a click of a mouse, but they were wrong. I would like to thank the NYPD investigators, prosecutors and our law enforcement partners whose hard work resulted in these arrests and seizures.”

District Attorney Brown said that the investigation leading to today’s arrests began in February 2014 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 a betting ring 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 District Attorney identified the alleged boss of the gambling operation as Cyrus Irani, 37, of Santa Clarita, California, who is accused of acting as the “bookmaker” who controlled and oversaw the entire operation and profited from each criminal pursuit by the other defendants. Clark W. Bruner, 56, of Downey, California, is alleged to have been Irani’s second-in-command and was the administrator over the accounts, managed the agents and collected the winnings from the agents. Bruner’s sons, Chris Bruner, 30, also of Downey, California, and Clark (C.J.) Bruner, 23, of Menifee, California, are alleged to have answered directly to their father and managed their own accounts, paid winners and collected debts from losers. Ten other individuals are accused of acting as agents or sub-agents along with two alleged money collectors and a clerk. **(See Addendum for additional details on the defendants).**

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the indictment, the defendants conspired to make money illegally through the operation of unlawful gambling that accepted bets on sporting events. It is alleged that Irani decided on wager limits, approved new accounts and all money collected eventually funneled up to him. It is additionally alleged that the gambling operation had more than 2,000 active bettors and utilized an 800 phone number and the off-shore Internet website www.365Action.com to allow bettors to wager on both professional and college basketball, football, hockey and baseball. Both the website and the toll-free number were allegedly connected to wire rooms and the defendants allegedly accepted payments using credit cards and bank deposits ranging from \$5,000 to \$270,000. It is alleged that some of the proceeds were allegedly used to buy memorabilia. For instance, during the course of the investigation, a telephone call was allegedly intercepted in which several of the defendants discussed getting \$10,000 to an individual who was selling a classic Batman comic book.

In addition to today’s arrests, court-authorized search warrants are being executed in California. At present, more than \$3 million has been seized by the FBI from bank account allegedly controlled by Cyrus Irani pursuant to federal seizure warrants.

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The investigation was conducted by Detective Sean MacDonald and other members of the New York City Police Department's Organized Crime Investigation Division Headquarters One Team under the supervision of Lieutenant Christopher Fasano, Captain John Dusanenko and Inspector John Denesopolis and under the overall supervision of Chief Thomas Purtell of the Organized Crime Control Bureau.

Assisting in the investigation was the Office of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York – specifically, Assistant United States Attorneys Tanya Hill, Deputy Chief of the Asset Forfeiture Unit, and Laura Mantell, Chief of the Asset Forfeiture Unit.

District Attorney Brown thanked the Nevada Gaming Control Board, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Los Angeles Police Department's Trans-National Organized Crime Unit for their assistance in the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Suzanne H. Sullivan, 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 Catherine C. Kane and Mary M. Lowenberg, 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.

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

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Note to Editors: Press release e-version posted on www.queensda.org.

ADDENDUM

* defendant being sought.

CYRUS IRANI, 37, of 26421 River Rock Way, Santa Clarita, California, is alleged to be the bookmaker or the boss of the organization. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first-, second-, third- and fourth-degree money laundering, first degree promoting gambling and fourth- and fifth-degree conspiracy.

CLARK W. BRUNER, 56, of 9524 Orizaba Avenue, Downey, California, is alleged to have been a primary agent or super agent. He is charged enterprise corruption, first-, third- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

CLARK (CJ) O. BRUNER, 33, of 28536 River Glen Court, Menifee, California, is alleged to have worked as a primary agent under Clark W. Bruner. The defendant is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

CHRIS BRUNER, 31, of 8308 Cherokee Drive, Downey, California, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

SAUL SALAMI, 45, of 24023 Via Cresta, Santa Clarita, California, is alleged to be an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling, and fourth- and fifth-degree conspiracy.

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MICHAEL GALLAGHER, 39, of 4525 Dean Martin Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

MICHAEL GALOYAN, 32, of 59 Dean Street, Hicksville, New York, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and third-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

JOHNSON MATHEW, 31, of 11880 Metropolitan Avenue, Kew Gardens, New York, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first-, second- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

JIMMY JOSEPH, 31, of 5 Butler Street, Congers, New York, is alleged to have been an agent. The defendant is charged with enterprise corruption, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

THOMAS CORTESE, 49, of 4647 Carpinteria Avenue, Santa Barbara, California, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and third-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

CASSONDRA SMITH-LUTTMAN, 32, of 969 Market Street, San Diego, California, is accused of being an agent. She is charged with enterprise corruption, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

JULIO ALVARENGA, 40, of 21051 Kingscrest Drive, Santa Clarita, California, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

*ANDRES ARRIAGA, 41, of 25873 McBean Parkway, Valencia, California, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling, fifth-degree conspiracy and fifth-degree conspiracy.

JEFFREY METELITZ, 54, of 23234 Cuestport Drive, Valencia, California, is alleged to have been an agent. He is charged with enterprise corruption, first- and fourth-degree money laundering, first-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

*RICHARD VANDERWYK, 41, of 1050 Electric Avenue, Seal Beach, California, is alleged to have been the money collector. He is charged with enterprise corruption and first- and fourth-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

HYUN (DAVID) CHANG, 37, of 4257 East Ocean Boulevard, Long Beach, California, is alleged to have been the money collector. He is charged with enterprise corruption and first- and fourth-degree promoting gambling and fifth-degree conspiracy.

*SALLY MEDINA, 49, of 1008 North 61 Lane, Phoenix, Arizona, is accused of being a clerk. She is charged with enterprise corruption and first- and fourth-degree money laundering and fifth-degree conspiracy.