



Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor For the City of New York
Bridget G. Brennan, Special Narcotics Prosecutor

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Five Charged in Sales of Fentanyl and Heroin in Brooklyn

Overdoses Linked to Organization, Drug Death in Staten Island

Bridget G. Brennan, New York City's Special Narcotics Prosecutor, New York City Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez and Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon announced today the arrest and indictment of five alleged members of a Sunset Park, Brooklyn-based criminal organization that allegedly trafficked in a variety of narcotics, including the potent synthetic opioid fentanyl, heroin and cocaine.

The arrests, which took place this morning, are the result of a long-term wiretap investigation by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor (SNP) and the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South. Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez reviewed and submitted multiple eavesdropping applications for court authorization.

The investigation, dubbed "Operation Blue Dope" for blue-colored fentanyl that was sold early in the probe, involved 16 alleged narcotics transactions with an NYPD undercover officer for a total of over \$45,000. The Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor filed an indictment containing charges of Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First, Second and Third Degrees and Conspiracy in the Second Degree. The defendants are scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon before Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Michele Rodney in Part 53, 111 Centre Street.

In September of 2018, an undercover NYPD officer began purchasing fentanyl from a pair of alleged drug sellers in Brooklyn, defendants RACHEL THOMPSON and BRIAN DECAVALLAS. Initially the pair sold bags of blue powder that subsequent NYPD laboratory analysis determined contained fentanyl. Over the next 10 months, sales to the undercover officer expanded to include heroin and cocaine, and involved four additional defendants associated with THOMPSON and DECAVALLAS: DEREK DECAVALLAS (brother to BRIAN DECAVALLAS), DAVID VELEZ and HECTOR FRANCES.

During the investigation, two individuals overdosed on narcotics allegedly linked to the Brooklyn-based organization. First, a Staten Island woman fatally overdosed in early 2019. Subsequently, a Brooklyn man related to BRIAN and DEREK DECAVALLAS suffered an overdose and survived.

An autopsy in the Staten Island fatal overdose conducted by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner determined the cause of death to be acute intoxication by the combined effects of fentanyl, fluoroisobutyrylfentanyl, cocaine and morphine. Fluoroisobutyrylfentanyl, a fentanyl analog (or variant), is currently controlled by the federal government on an emergency basis, but remains unregulated under New York State law. The analog first emerged in New York City in 2017 and has been involved in a substantial number of deaths since that time.

In carrying out narcotics sales, THOMPSON and BRIAN DECAVALLAS received drug orders from the undercover by phone. They directed the undercover officer to meet at prearranged locations in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. The wiretap investigation revealed THOMPSON and/or DECAVALLAS would contact their suppliers by phone to procure narcotics. The undercover officer waited nearby as a narcotics supplier or suppliers would deliver drugs to THOMPSON and/or DECAVALLAS by car. THOMPSON and/or DECAVALLAS would sell those drugs to the undercover officer almost immediately afterwards. The five defendants are charged with conspiring together in the drug business.

NYPD laboratory analysis determined the substances sold included fentanyl, heroin and cocaine, as well as mixtures of fentanyl, heroin and tramadol, another synthetic opioid. In one November sale, drugs sold to the undercover officer contained fentanyl and heroin mixed with an unspecified substance that is on the federal list of controlled substances but remains unregulated in New York State.

Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan thanked Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon, SNP's Trial Division and the NYPD's Narcotics Borough Brooklyn South.

"Members of this South Brooklyn based narcotics organization raked in tens of thousands of dollars selling fentanyl laced narcotics, including drugs linked to an overdose death in Staten Island. The lethal mix included a variation of fentanyl that, while capable of causing death, is not illegal under New York State law," said Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget G. Brennan. "I thank our law enforcement partners for their work on this investigation, and urge the New York State legislature to pass a law making all deadly varieties of fentanyl illegal. Give us the tools we need to seize drugs that kill."

"The success of this operation and subsequent arrests demonstrates the importance of law enforcement working collectively to target dangerous drug operations," said Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill. "The NYPD will continue to vigorously pursue these types of criminal networks and illicit criminal activity with our partners to stop this threat to public safety."

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez said, "The dangerous, highly addictive, and oftentimes deadly, narcotics these defendants allegedly sold claimed lives, destroyed families and damaged communities throughout the city. I remain committed to fighting the opioid epidemic by working with our partners in law enforcement to target narcotic distribution rings and holding their leaders accountable for their decision to profit off the addictions and suffering of others."

Staten Island District Attorney Michael E. McMahon said, "Our overdose investigations continue to yield positive results, helping my office and our partners to trace back the source of the deadly drugs being peddled in our communities. As this case and many others show, combating the opioid epidemic requires a collaborative effort on multiple fronts and I thank the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, the NYPD, and Brooklyn DA's office for their crucial efforts. We will continue working together to hold dealers accountable and ensure justice is served in every corner of the City where illegal narcotics are sold."

Indicted Defendants

Charges

Rachel Thompson	CSCS 1 st – 5 cts
Brooklyn, NY	CSCS 2 nd – 6 cts
3/16/1987	CSCS 3 rd – 1 ct
	Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct

Brian Decavallas Brooklyn, NY 5/17/1989	CSCS 1 st – 3 cts CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct CSCS 3 rd – 2 cts Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct
Derek Decavallas Brooklyn, NY 12/25/1979	CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct
David Velez Brooklyn, NY 3/27/1992	CSCS 1 st – 2 cts CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct
Hector Frances Brooklyn, NY 7/28/1988	CSCS 1 st – 4 cts CSCS 2 nd – 1 ct Conspiracy 2 nd – 1 ct

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.