

# **EXHIBIT 13**

## CQ Newsmaker Transcripts

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# Justice Department Holds News Briefing on China-Based Chemical Manufacturing Companies and Arrests of Executives in Fentanyl Manufacturing

## LIST OF SPEAKERS

MERRICK GARLAND:

All right. Good afternoon. I'm joined today by Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, DEA Administrator Anne Milgram, US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Damien Williams and US Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Breon Peace. When I announced in April that the Justice Department had taken significant enforcement actions against the Sinaloa cartel, I promised that the Justice Department would never forget the victims of the fentanyl epidemic.

I also promised that we would never stop working to hold accountable those who bear responsibility for it. That includes not only going after the leaders of the cartels, their drug and gun traffickers, their money launderers, security forces and clandestine lab operators, it also includes stopping the Chinese chemical companies that are supplying the cartels with the building blocks they need to manufacture deadly fentanyl.

We are targeting every step of the movement, manufacturing and sale of fentanyl from start to finish. To that end, we are announcing several

enforcement actions the Justice Department has taken to disrupt the flow of fentanyl precursor chemicals from China to Mexico and the United States. In three separate indictments, we have charged for the first time ever four chemical companies based in China and eight Chinese nationals for the trafficking of fentanyl precursor chemicals into the United States.

These companies and their employees knowingly conspired to manufacture deadly fentanyl for distribution in the United States as alleged in our filings, just one of these China based chemical companies shipped more than 200 kilograms of fentanyl related precursor chemicals to the US for the purpose of making 50 kilograms of fentanyl, a quantity that could contain enough deadly doses of fentanyl to kill 25 million Americans.

First, as outlined in the indictment unsealed today in the Southern District of New York, we have brought charges against a China based manufacturer and supplier of fentanyl precursor chemicals, its principal executive and two of its employees for their role in international fentanyl trafficking conspiracy.

As outlined in the indictment, we allege that the defendants openly advertised the sale of fentanyl precursors online and sought to evade law enforcement detection by using deceptive packaging. They went as far as to guarantee, quote, 100 percent stealth shipping and they provided proof of their success on their websites, including a screenshot of a shipping confirmation to Culiacan Mexico, the Sinaloa cartel's base of operations.

The indictment also details correspondence and in-person meetings between the defendants and an individual purporting to be a fentanyl trafficker in Mexico with operations in the US. In one message, one of

the defendants responded to the admission that the chemicals were being used to make fentanyl and that it was not safe with, quote, I know.

In another conversation which took place earlier this month, two of the defendants allegedly discussed the need to take additional measures to protect themselves from detection and interdiction following a recent enforcement action by the US government. This was an apparent reference to the charges that I announced against members and associates of the Sinaloa cartel in April.

One of the defendants indicated that the US government had, quote, seized some Mexican group, end quote, followed the routes to China, which was, quote, bad news for us. Over the past eight months, the defendants are alleged to have shipped more than 200 kilograms of fentanyl related precursor chemicals to the US in order to make 50 kilograms of fentanyl.

As I said, this is a quantity that could contain enough deadly doses of fentanyl to kill 25 million Americans. What the defendants did not know at the time is that the purported traffickers they were dealing with were in fact DEA confidential sources. And the 200 kilograms of fentanyl related precursors they shipped to the US were received by DEA agents.

Two of the defendants, the principal executive of the chemical company and one of its employees have been arrested by federal law enforcement. Additionally, in two separate indictments in the Eastern District of New York, we have charged three other companies based in China and five of their employees with conspiracy to manufacture and distribute fentanyl.

As alleged in the indictments, each of these companies also supplies precursor chemicals to the US and Mexico, among other places, knowing they will be used to produce fentanyl or other controlled substances. Like the company charged in the Southern District of New York, all three of these companies openly advertise their products all over the world and guarantee that the products they send to the US and Mexico will not be detected or intercepted.

To fulfill this guarantee, they likewise employ deceptive and fraudulent practices such as mislabeling packages and making false declarations at border crossings. But these companies also went a step further to evade testing protocols and relevant regulations. They added what are known as masking molecules to their fentanyl precursor chemicals.

Once these masking molecules are added, the chemical signature of the precursor is changed. That means when it's shipped, it appears to be a new non-fentanyl precursor substance. Upon receipt of the shipment, however, the purchaser is able to easily remove the masking molecules and return the chemical to its original form as a fentanyl precursor.

As alleged in the indictment, these companies not only produced and distributed masked precursors, but also provided instructions about how to remove the masking molecules upon receipt. The actions we are announcing today should make clear that the US Justice Department is accelerating our efforts to disrupt the manufacture and trafficking of fentanyl at every stage and in every part of the world.

Our agents and prosecutors are working relentlessly to get fentanyl out of our communities and hold accountable those who put it there. In 2022, the DEA together with our federal, state and local law

enforcement partners, seized more than 50.6 million fentanyl laced fake prescription pills. That is more than double the amount seized in 2021. The DEA has also seized more than 10,000 pounds of fentanyl powder.

Together, these seizures represent more than 379 million potentially deadly doses of fentanyl. That much Fentanyl could kill every single American. We are also putting our resources to work to confront the public health challenges of addiction and substance abuse by supporting prevention and treatment programs.

The US government continues to do everything in our power to disrupt fentanyl trafficking and prevent more of our communities from being devastated by the fentanyl epidemic. We also continue to strongly urge the PRC government to take decisive action to address the role that China based chemical and pharmaceutical companies play in fentanyl drug production and trafficking.

We stand ready to work together to address this global challenge. I want to thank the DEA agents for the extraordinary work that they did on these cases and for the difficult work they do every day to protect our communities from deadly drugs. I'm also grateful to the US attorney's offices for the Southern and Eastern districts of New York and to the Office of International Affairs of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

I'll now turn the podium over to Deputy Attorney General Monaco.

LISA MONACO:

Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Attorney General. Two months ago, the Attorney General and I pledged to employ every tool in the government's arsenal at every stage of the fentanyl supply chain in

every part of the globe to protect American communities. Today's announcement is a down payment on that pledge.

It breaks new ground by attacking the fentanyl supply chain at its origin. For the first time, we are charging Chinese chemical companies and their employees for conspiring to manufacture and export fentanyl precursor chemicals and circumvent customs laws. Fentanyl poses a singular threat, not only because the smallest of doses can be lethal, but because fentanyl does not occur in nature.

It is entirely manmade and in potentially limitless supply. So with our partners across government and across the globe, the Department of Justice is working relentlessly to dismantle the global supply and delivery chain that floods fentanyl into American communities. The fentanyl supply chain all too often begins in China, where the chemical ingredients for fentanyl are produced and exported by the ton.

We allege the Chinese chemical companies charged today combined scientific knowhow with deception to circumvent customs barriers and ship precursors onto our shores and Mexico's. The cartels use those ingredients to manufacture fentanyl, which they then push into our communities, using social media to market pills and cryptocurrency to launder profits.

Today's charges make clear that those who feed the fentanyl supply chain cannot hide behind the facade of legitimate business. When companies and employees, including those in the C-suite, knowingly fuel the fentanyl crisis, they will be held to account. We will expose them as drug traffickers. So let me be clear.

The Justice Department will not rest or relent in investigating and prosecuting every link of the fentanyl supply chain in every corner of

the globe. There can be no safe haven. As we've seen in our efforts to combat terrorism and cyber-crime, we do more when we move together. That's why continued collaboration with Mexico is crucial and why we've dedicated more resources to support Mexico's frontline fentanyl prosecutors.

And that's why we're strengthening our efforts to stem the Southbound flow of illicit high powered firearms across our Southern border, firearms that fuel violence in Mexico and empower cartels to expand their deadly drug trade back into the United States. And that's why we will continue to call on the Chinese government to hold PRC companies accountable for the global harm they are causing.

And today's charges allege those charged knew that they were breaking Chinese law as well as our own. More broadly, compelling evidence shows that PRC companies are selling vast quantities of precursor chemicals to the drug cartels. The United States has urged the PRC to address the serious problem of illicit synthetic drug production and trafficking.

We renew that call today. This is a global problem that demands a global solution. Finally, I want to say a word about the role of social media. In these indictments, the precursor sellers brazenly advertised on social media platforms. The department has encouraged social media platforms to enforce their terms of service and remove this content.

We've encouraged social media platforms to work with us to address this public safety emergency. We will continue to work with these companies so that they can better police their own platforms until they no longer serve as superhighways of drug trafficking. Several



major platforms are now working productively with us on this, and we urge those who are not to join this fight.

Today's actions are the result of the hard work of the women and men of the DEA and the tenacious prosecutors from the Eastern and Southern districts of New York. It is a privilege to work with them. Let me now turn the podium over to the DEA administrator.

ANNE MILGRAM:

Thank you. Thank you. Good afternoon. Thank you, Attorney General Garland and Deputy Attorney General Monaco. Fentanyl is the greatest threat to Americans today. It is devastating families across our country and killing Americans from all walks of life and it is the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 to 45. The Drug Enforcement Administration is actively targeting every single aspect of the global fentanyl supply chain, so that we can put an end to the most devastating drug crisis that our country has ever seen.

The two drug cartels that are responsible for the influx of fentanyl into the United States, the Sinaloa and Hilco cartels, work with chemical companies based in the People's Republic of China to get their raw materials. Those companies and the individuals who work for them provide drug traffickers with the necessary ingredients to make fentanyl, chemicals called fentanyl precursors.

Nearly all fentanyl precursors are manufactured and shipped from China today. For the first time ever, we have charged four PRC companies with fentanyl trafficking conspiracy. We have also charged eight PRC nationals who work for those companies, and we have taken two of them into custody. We have also seized more than 200 kilograms of fentanyl precursors in this operation alone, enough to make millions of deadly doses of fentanyl.

Make no mistake, the charged defendants knew exactly what they were doing. As alleged in the indictments unsealed today, the defendants provided their customers with the blueprints for making fentanyl, a poison that is killing Americans. They provided the chemicals. They gave advice on how to mix them. They made changes to the recipe when an ingredient wasn't available.

They told a customer to substitute one ingredient for another to make twice as much fentanyl. They employed chemists to troubleshoot when customers had questions. They mislabeled packages and falsified customs forms to get the chemicals across borders. They even disguise the chemicals at a molecular level, adding a molecule to mask the precursors, so they would not be detected as banned substances during transport.

And they taught their customers how to remove that molecule after they received the chemicals. As alleged, these defendants gave their customers, the raw materials and the scientific know how to make fentanyl and they knew exactly who they were working with. They talked freely about having clients in America and Mexico and specifically in Sinaloa, Mexico, where the Sinaloa cartel is based.

These cases show that fentanyl precursors are cheap. In just one example, a defendant sold two kilograms of fentanyl precursors for approximately \$1,000 USD. Those same precursors can yield 1.75 million lethal doses of fentanyl. Basically, that means that the price per lethal dose is less than \$0.01. The amount of fentanyl that can be made today depends only on the amount of precursor chemicals that can be purchased.

And at prices like these, the amounts are limitless. And these cases show that fentanyl precursors are easily bought online. These

companies advertise fentanyl precursors on social media, on Facebook and on LinkedIn. They used encrypted applications like WhatsApp to speak with customers and to coordinate shipments.

They disguise the shipments as legitimate goods, with fake labels and falsified customs paperwork, that said that what was inside was dog food or raw cosmetic materials, when in fact, they were fentanyl precursors. And they took payment in Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies to try to hide who they were and to make it harder to follow the money back.

This is the unprecedented threat we are dealing with, synthetic manmade chemicals, advertised on social media, coordinated through encrypted communications, paid for in cryptocurrency, shipped as powders, and that is why more than 110,000 Americans died from drug poisonings last year alone. Today's indictments target the threat where it starts.

I want to thank the men and women of the DEA Special Operations Division, Bilateral Investigation Unit, the DEA's New York Field Division and the DEA's New York Drug Enforcement Task Force. I also want to thank our partners, the prosecutors in the Southern District of New York and the Eastern District of New York, as well as our five other DEA offices who assisted with this investigation.

I also want to thank our law enforcement partners at the Royal Thai Police and the Fiji Police Force for their assistance in this investigation. Today's charges continue DEA's work to target the global fentanyl supply chain. In April, we announced the indictment of 28 members and associates of the Sinaloa cartel, and we track them across the globe from China to Central America to Mexico to the United States.

In May, we announced the arrests of 3,337 associates of the Sinaloa and cartels from a one year operation across the United States. After those announcements, one of the defendants in this case told a confidential source that was, quote, bad news for us. We know that the criminals are watching. Here is our message to them.

There is more bad news coming. With every investigation, with every indictment, we are coming after you and we will not relent until this crisis ends. Thank you and it's now my privilege to introduce to you today the US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Damien Williams.

DAMIAN WILLIAMS:

Back in April when we announced groundbreaking charges in the Southern District of New York against members of the Sinaloa cartel and others, I said that case was the most important of my tenure as US attorney. That's because fentanyl is the law enforcement and public health crisis of our time. The indictment unsealed today in the southern District of New York is the next step in our fight against fentanyl.

Today, we target the very beginning of the fentanyl supply chain, the Chinese manufacturers of the raw chemicals used to make fentanyl and its analogs. We've charged a Chinese precursor chemical company and that's not all. We've charged and arrested some of the individuals who work at the company, that includes a corporate executive and a marketing manager.

They're in American handcuffs and they're going to face justice in an American courtroom. The company we've charged, Amavel Biotech, sought to profit off an opioid epidemic that is killing hundreds of thousands of Americans. The company openly advertised and sold

fentanyl precursor chemicals knowing that these chemicals were destined for New York City, knowing that the chemicals would be turned into fentanyl and knowing that that poison could kill.

Over the course of this investigation, Amavel biotech ship to the United States, more than 200 kilograms of precursor chemicals used to make fentanyl and its analogs. And for this company, 200 kilograms was apparently only a drop in the bucket. As alleged in the indictment, Amavel Biotech has also made efforts to thwart law enforcement seizure of their shipments, including deceptively packaging precursor chemicals and containers for dog food or motor oil.

This indictment and the other actions my office has announced recently make clear that we will hold accountable every link in this fentanyl distribution chain, and we are not done. We will continue to show that our reach is long and that we will investigate, charge and capture those who profit from this poison.

I want to thank the attorney general and the deputy attorney general for their continued commitment to combating the fentanyl crisis. I also want to thank my friend and Milgrom for her leadership and thank her extraordinary team at DEA. I want to thank our colleagues at the Office of International Affairs.

And finally, I want to thank the SDNY prosecutors who are handling this case, Xander Li and Kevin Sullivan, from my office's National Security and International Narcotics Unit. It's now my pleasure to turn the podium over to my friend, Breon Peace, the US attorney from the Eastern District of New York.

BREON PEACE:

Thank you, US Attorney Williams, and good afternoon. Today, we unsealed two indictments collectively charging eight defendants including three Chinese chemical companies and five Chinese nationals with among other crimes, conspiring to manufacture and import fentanyl to the United States. These indictments are among the first in the nation, but not the last, involving companies that provide raw chemicals to drug traffickers, knowing that these chemicals will be used to make and distribute fentanyl in the United States.

These charges are the culmination of a yearlong investigation which uncovered that the defendant companies manufacture and stockpiled fentanyl precursors the chemicals and substances used to manufacture fentanyl and employ chemists to help them market and sell the substances. The defendant companies openly advertised their products all over the world, including on social media platforms.

And while the defendants largely sold the components of fentanyl, most of which were ostensibly legal, they did so as conspirators and accomplices, knowing these substances would be used in a fentanyl manufacturing scheme. As this prosecution shows, that is a crime. This is akin to a company selling the components for a bomb knowing they would be used to make an explosive.

We know too well that the witch's brew of fentanyl chemicals cooked by the drug traffickers can be just as deadly. The defendants sent their chemicals to the US and Mexico by boat and air using public and private international mail and package carriers and to prevent detection and interception of chemical products at the borders, the defendant companies employed deceptive and fraudulent practices such as mislabeling packages as other innocuous products such as

cosmetics or food additives, falsifying customs forms and making false declarations at border crossings.

The defendants also disguised known fentanyl precursors to avoid detection and seizure by law enforcement by adding masking molecules, thereby changing the chemical signature of the underlying precursor chemicals to make them harder to detect while passing through customs and other inspections. These altered substances could evade testing protocols and relevant regulations by appearing to be a new substance.

Such masking molecules are easily removed, enabling the purchaser to return the substance to its original form. The defendants even provided instructions about how to remove the masking molecules, ensuring their customers were able to use the banned precursor chemicals to manufacture fentanyl. And the defendants gave instructions on how to increase the amount of fentanyl the precursors would produce and advice on which chemicals to buy to replace banned precursor products.

Our investigation also revealed the defendant's connections to Mexican drug cartels. The defendants communicated with suspected associates of the Sinaloa cartel and CJNG in Mexico. They advertise their quote best-selling products in Mexico and even maintain warehouses in Mexico to store precursor chemicals.

The chemicals provided by the defendant companies have enabled cartels and other drug trafficking organizations to produce fentanyl in clandestine laboratories in Mexico on a massive scale for subsequent distribution in the United States and elsewhere. The materials and instructions provided by the defendant companies and companies like

them have directly caused and contributed to the influx of deadly fentanyl into the United States.

Now, the defendants hoped that by selling only the components of fentanyl or by masking the chemical structures of precursors or mislabeling their products that they could escape scrutiny and accountability. This prosecution proves them wrong. And to the companies and the employees that supply fentanyl precursor chemicals, knowing that they will be used to make illegal fentanyl, you are drug suppliers, and you are also drug traffickers.

We will identify you and prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law. The charges brought today exemplify our office's battle against fentanyl, which is inflicting untold tragedy in New York City, Long Island and across the nation. We will not rest until this crisis is brought to an end. So I want to thank people who were involved in this investigation.

I want to first thank you, Attorney General Garland, Deputy Attorney General Monaco and DEA Administrator Milgram for their leadership in combating the fentanyl crisis. I'd also like to give special thanks to our law enforcement and agency partners, including DEA New York, DEA Mexico, DEA Diversion Control Division, DEA Special Testing and Research Laboratory, United States Customs and Border Protections New York Field Office, the Internal Revenue Services New York Division and United States Postal Inspection Services of New York.

I'd also like to thank the team from my office who have worked tirelessly to protect our community, Assistant United States Attorney's Francisco Navarro, Erik Paulsen, Chand Edwards-Balfour and Adam Amir and investigator George Dietz. Thank you.



UNKNOWN:

Questions? [Inaudible].

QUESTION:

Yes. Hi. Thank you. I have an on topic and then an off topic. On the on topic on fentanyl, this is unique in the sense that we're talking now companies. Before, we talked more of individual people in cartels. Where does this idea of going after companies fit into the overall picture of fighting fentanyl Can more companies, should more companies be on alert?

MERRICK GARLAND:

The answer to that is yes. We are applying a network approach to this. We are going to follow fentanyl all the way from the precursor companies to importation either into Mexico or into the United States, to manufacturing clandestine labs, to crossing the border or clandestine labs in the United States to transfer within the United States to sales on the streets.

I'd like to give Administrator Milgrom a chance to explain the strategy for a moment. I promise to get back to you on the other question.

ANNE MILGRAM:

I would echo what the attorney general has said. Our approach right now, our mission is simple, to save American lives by stopping fentanyl, defeating the two cartels that are responsible and by working relentlessly across the entire network of the global fentanyl supply chain, which is right now led by those two cartels that we mentioned, the Sinaloa and Hilco cartels.

As I said, the amount of fentanyl that can be made is limited only by the amount of precursor chemicals that can be purchased and used to make fentanyl. And that's why we have to be relentless at every single part of this supply chain and in particular, starting where it begins which is with the precursor chemicals that right now are coming mostly from the People's Republic of China.

There are companies and individuals, many of whom we've charged today. Other individuals we charged as part of the Cheetos indictment in April, and we have many ongoing investigations into every single part of the network that the attorney general just described.

MERRICK GARLAND:

David, you had another question.

QUESTION:

Sure. My other question, yesterday, whistleblower testimony came out from an IRS supervisory special agent, current supervisory special agent who insists he was in a meeting with US attorney David Weiss who in October 2022 claimed in front of multiple people that he was told not to pursue the Hunter Biden investigation not to bring charges in 2022. You said previously you've stayed out of the Hunter Biden investigation.

It's been on David Weiss to figure that out. Can you once and for all shed a little light? There seems to be a little confusion on what's going on here.

MERRICK GARLAND:

I'd be happy to. As I said at the outset, Mr. Weiss, who was appointed by President Trump as the US attorney in Delaware and assigned this

matter during the previous administration would be permitted to continue his investigation and to make a decision to prosecute any way in which he wanted to and in any district in which he wanted to. Mr. Weiss has since sent a letter to the House Judiciary Committee confirming that he had that authority.

I don't know how it would be possible for anybody to block him from bringing a prosecution, given that he has this authority.

QUESTION:

And he was never no?

MERRICK GARLAND:

I say, he was given complete authority to make all decisions on his own.

UNKNOWN:

Next question. [Inaudible].

QUESTION:

Mr. Garland, just to follow up on that, one of the allegations that one of the IRS supervisors apparently made involved the fact that Mr. Weiss reportedly wanted to have the powers you've conferred on special counsels. Was that request ever made? And if so, why did you reject it?

MERRICK GARLAND:

It was not. The only person with authority to make somebody a special counsel or refuse to make somebody a special counsel is the attorney general. Mr. Weiss never made that request to me.

QUESTION:

Just to follow on that, do you think that a special counsel--can you explain the rationale for not appointing a special counsel in this case?

MERRICK GARLAND:

Mr. Weiss had in fact more authority than a special counsel would have had. He had and has complete authority, as I said, to bring a case anywhere he wants in his discretion.

UNKNOWN:

Last question. [Inaudible].

QUESTION:

Just an on topic question. What do these indictments--

MERRICK GARLAND:

Those are always very much welcomed.

QUESTION:

I have an off topic as well, unfortunately.

MERRICK GARLAND:

Of course.

QUESTION:

But what do these indictments do to actually stop these companies from operating? Obviously, Secretary Blinken met with his Chinese counterparts recently. Did he bring up the need for these specific

companies to be shuttered in China, so they're not allowed to do this further, and to extradite the people that were charged and are still in China?

MERRICK GARLAND:

I don't have a readout from that meeting, so I direct you to the State Department on that question. I think we're talking about a whole of government approach here. We have prosecutions, we have arrests, we have indictments, we have sanctions by the Treasury Department, we have diplomacy by the State Department, altogether intended to make it difficult, if not impossible, for the precursor companies to continue to send the fentanyl precursors to Mexico.

QUESTION:

And on the off topic, I mean with the exception of what you've said today, you've deferred all other questions related to the Hunter Biden investigation to Mr. Weiss. Mr. Weiss has declined to comment on any of this, with the exception of his letter to the House Judiciary that just says that he had the ultimate authority to charge and where to charge.

But on these specific allegations that these whistleblowers have brought forward, there's very detailed allegations. Would you authorize him to answer to some of the more specific allegations that these IRS whistleblowers have come forward with?

MERRICK GARLAND:

Look, I would support Mr. Weiss explaining or testifying on these matters when he deems it appropriate.

UNKNOWN:

Sorry, one more question. Carrie, go ahead.

QUESTION:

Mr. Attorney General, Republicans in Congress have flirted with the idea of holding the FBI director in contempt. It's become a talking point on the campaign trail, the alleged corruption in the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies. Do the American people have cause to be concerned about the integrity of the components of this Justice Department, and what do you have to say about how they're acting?

MERRICK GARLAND:

I certainly understand that some have chosen to attack the integrity of the Justice Department and its components and its employees by claiming that we do not treat like cases alike. This constitutes an attack on an institution that is essential to American democracy and essential to the safety of the American people.

Nothing could be further from the truth. You've all heard me say many times that we make our cases based on the facts and the law. These are not just words, these are what we live by. They are the foundation of the way we make these decisions. The agents of the FBI, as well as the DEA, the ATF, our deputy US marshals every day, often at great personal risk, protect the American people and secure its safety.

Our cases are based on their work. I could not be more proud to work with them. Thank you.

UNKNOWN:

Thank you, everyone. Thank you. Thank you.

**List of Speakers**

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ANNE MILGRAM

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O. MONACO

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ATTORNEY GENERAL MERRICK  
GARLAND

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK ATTORNEY DAMIAN  
WILLIAMS