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Accused Brooklyn coke dealer released amid ‘filthy’ conditions and coronavirus concerns at federal jail

By Noah Goldberg

New York Daily News • Mar 26, 2020 at 12:18 pm



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Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. (Jesse Ward/for New York Daily News)

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A suspected cocaine dealer accused of orchestrating robberies and a Brooklyn pistol-whip beatdown of another pusher was ordered released by a federal judge after his lawyer argued that the jail he's being held in is "filthy" and he's at high risk of contracting coronavirus there.

Ivan Eli allegedly took part in two robberies against the same victim in July 2018 and another in March 2019 though he was not physically present at either, according to law enforcement. During the first robbery, a gun was fired in the victim's apartment. In the second incident, two men bound the man with duct tape, beat him with their guns and stole a kilo of cocaine.

"The situation [in the city's jails] is deteriorating fast and people like Mr. Eli are in jeopardy," argued Eli's lawyer Benjamin Silverman in court documents.

Eli has medical issues but specifics on his condition were under seal for privacy reasons. He is being held at Brooklyn's federal lockup, the Metropolitan Detention Center.



“With all due respect to the government, its portrayal of the conditions at the MDC and the likely effects of a COVID-19 crisis there are not consonant with reality.” Silverman wrote. “Counsel visits the MDC approximately 25 times each year. It is filthy. Soap is nowhere to be found despite any contrary claims from the MDC.”

Silverman added that Eli may have had contact with an MDC inmate who tested positive for the virus.

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A federal magistrate judge, Ramon Reyes, bought the arguments and on Tuesday released Eli on \$150,000 bond, despite the feds opposing the move and comparing his case to that of high-profile lawyer Michael Avenatti, who is being held in Manhattan's federal jail and had his COVID-19 bail application rejected.

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People practice social distancing while enjoying the nice weather at Central Park's Sheep Meadow on Saturday, May 2, 2020, in New York. New York City police dispatched 1,000 officers this weekend to enforce social distancing as warmer weather tempted New Yorkers to come out of quarantine. (Ronald Blum/AP)

Eli will be under house arrest and electronically monitored. He is charged with robbery conspiracy, possession of cocaine with intent to distribute and brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence.



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