

NEWS

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Third Member of Once Notorious Essex County Street Gang Sentenced to Decades in Prison

(More)

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NEWARK – A particularly ruthless member of the once notorious Double ii Bloods street gang was sentenced today to 34 years in federal prison for racketeering acts that included murder of a man in front of his 8-year-old son, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

The sentence was the longest of four imposed earlier this week on three leading members and one associate of the Double ii Bloods, a gang “set” formerly based in East Orange that was dismantled by federal prosecutions that resulted in a total of 43 guilty pleas.

U.S. District Judge Katharine S. Hayden imposed a 34-year sentence today on Amir Winn, 24, who pleaded guilty along with four other Bloods gang members on Sept. 21, 2006. At his plea hearing, Winn admitted gunning down the father of a child when the father asked that gang members leave the 8-year-old alone.

On Tuesday, Judge Hayden sentenced Quadree “Trouble” Smith, 26, to 30 years in prison, and Samir Moses, 22, to 28 years. On Monday, Judge Hayden sentenced Tewhan “Massacre” Butler, 27 – the Double ii Bloods leader or “101” in Bloods parlance – to 30 years in federal prison.

All four men, each of whom admitted committing at least one murder in furtherance of gang activity of the Double ii Bloods,” pleaded guilty on Sept. 21, 2006, amid jury selection for their racketeering trial. A fifth defendant, David Alston, also pleaded guilty that day and is scheduled for sentencing tomorrow.

There is no parole in the federal system, and inmates can be expected to serve nearly all of their sentences.

The guilty pleas came amid jury selection for the defendants’ impending racketeering trial. Members of the Double ii Bloods were alleged to have committed or attempted to commit at least 19 murders, ran a high-level heroin distribution ring, committed aggravated assaults, armed robberies, arson and trafficked in firearms.

“These are appropriate sentences that will remove these ruthless individuals from society,” Christie said. “The sentences also stand as a message to other gang members in New Jersey about the consequences they can expect in return for the mayhem they bring to our cities.”

The guilty pleas on Sept. 21 were as follows:

- Winn, to racketeering and the following racketeering acts: murder, two attempted murders and conspiracy to distribute heroin. Winn admitted, among other things, that on July 25, 2002, he sought out another man, LaQuan Brooks, for “disrespecting” the Bloods

because Brooks had said to other Double ii members that he was upset about the gang members bothering his 8-year-old son. Winn admitted that, after getting a gun, he found Brooks, called him into the street and shot him once in the chest amid a crowd of people, including Brooks' son. Brooks died from his wounds.

- Butler, to racketeering and the following racketeering acts: murder, conspiracy to commit other murders and conspiracy to distribute heroin. At his plea, Butler described the Oct. 19, 2000 murder of Robin Dwayne Thompson at a gasoline station in East Orange. Butler said he got out of his car with a gun, covered his face with an article of clothing, approached Thompson from behind and shot him in the back of the head two times, killing him. The government contends the murder was part of Butler's effort to solidify his reputation in the neighborhood. At his plea, Butler boasted about his leadership of the Double ii set: "I was the chain of command," he said. "There is no one above me."
- Smith, to racketeering and dealing firearms without a license, and the following racketeering acts: murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder and conspiracy to distribute heroin. During his guilty plea, Smith said he too was a leader of the Double ii set and mimicked a remark from Butler. "I *was* the chain of command," he said. Smith said that on April 29, 2000, he shot and killed Bryant "Dirty O" Williams in a dispute over money. Smith also admitted that he purchased "dozens" of weapons, including semi-automatic assault rifles, from an Ohio gun dealer, using intermediaries to obtain and transport the weapons to East Orange.
- Moses, a Bloods gang member associated with another gang set, to racketeering and the following racketeering acts: murder and arson. Moses admitted that on April 17, 2004, he and other Double ii members were driving through an East Orange neighborhood and spotted what he believed to be a group of Crips gang members. Moses said that after one of them flashed a Crips hand signal, he got out of the car with a gun and shot the 16-year-old, Anthony Copeland, who died from a single gunshot wound to the chest.
- Alston, to racketeering and specific racketeering acts that included murder, two attempted murders and heroin distribution. He admitted to shooting fellow Double ii member Al-Kabir Sorey on Jan 19, 2003. The government alleges it was over a drug dispute.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Serina Vash, Marion Percell and Christopher Kelly.

For their work in this investigation, related prosecutions and continuing law enforcement efforts against street gangs in Essex County, Christie credited and thanked the following officers and agencies: Special Agents of the FBI; Special Agents of the Bureau of

Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; assistant prosecutors and investigators from the Essex County Prosecutor's Office; the East Orange Police Department; the Irvington Police Department; the Newark Police Department; the Orange Police Department; the Essex County Sheriff's Department, and the Essex County Department of Corrections.

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Defense Counsel:

Butler: Wanda Akin, Esq.

Smith: Randy Davenport, Esq.

Winn: Cathy Waldor, Esq. And Linwood Jones, Esq.

Moses: Gerald Fusell, Esq.

Alston: Joseph Donahue, Esq.