



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Leura G. Canary
Middle District of Alabama

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

www.usdoj.gov/usao/alm

CONTACT: Retta Goss
Telephone (334) 223-7280
Fax (334) 223-7560
Cell (334) 546-1930

MACON COUNTY MEN SENTENCED IN DRUG CONSPIRACY

Drug Ring Disrupted

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA — Tyrone Watson, Rasheek Morris, Mike Felton and Keith Tolbert, of Macon, Alabama, pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, and possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime between March, 2005, and November, 2008, U.S. Attorney Leura G. Canary announced today.

In October 2005, law enforcement received information that led them to believe that Watson and Morris were running a drug distribution organization selling cocaine and crack in the Middle District of Alabama. Armed with the information, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) agents, deputies with the Lee County Sheriff's Department, and officers with the Opelika Police Department, developed a Confidential Source who began making purchases from Watson and Morris. The purchases took place at a trailer located on Essie Morris Road in the Lee and Macon Counties area. The Essie Morris Road location was the center for the drug trafficking activity and was equipped with security cameras and armed guards.

Between May 2005 and March 2006, law enforcement made numerous purchases from Watson, Morris and Felton, who often acted as armed guard and manager for the operation. On March 3, 2006, the Lee County Sheriff's Department executed a search warrant at the Essie Morris Road location, looking for property stolen from the Lee County School Board. Present at the location and arrested was, among others, Keith Tolbert, who was armed with a firearm and a quantity of crack cocaine. Tolbert, a local drug user, often acted as lookout, guard and errand boy for Watson and Morris, in exchange for crack cocaine. During the search of the location, agents found numerous firearms, including assault rifles, ammunition, money, drug paraphernalia and quantities of cocaine, crack and marijuana. Numerous individuals present and arrested at the time of the search stated that their purpose at the site was to purchase crack from Watson and Morris and that they had been doing so for years.

At a sentencing hearing before United States District Court Judge Mark E. Fuller, on November 4, 2008, Tolbert received a sentence of 110 months, 5 years Supervised Release and was ordered to pay an assessment fee of \$200 to the court; Felton received a sentence of 130 months, 5 years Supervised Release and was ordered to pay an assessment fee of \$300 to the

court; Watson received a sentence of 147 months, 5 years Supervised Release and was ordered to pay an assessment fee of \$200 to the court; and Morris received a sentence of 138 months, 5 years Supervised Release and was ordered to pay an assessment fee of \$200 to the court.

The case was investigated by the Lee County Sheriff's Department, the Opelika Police Department, the HIDTA Task Force and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Susan R. Redmond and Tommie Brown Hardwick.