



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Southern District of Georgia*

*Post Office Box 8970
Savannah, GA 31412
(912) 652-4422*

*100 Bull Street
Savannah, GA 31401
FAX (912) 652-4388*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 09, 2008**

**CONTACT: Edmund A. Booth, Jr.
United States Attorney
(706) 724-0517 or (912) 652-4422**

Three Charged in Brunswick Area Drug Cases

Edmund A. Booth, Jr., United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in Savannah returned two indictments on April 3, 2008 against three individuals charging them with drug offenses occurring in Brunswick.

In the first indictment, Jason Sheffield, age 27, and Tomas Garcia Gutierrez, also known as "Gamaliel Gutierrez-Menera," age 36, were charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute 5 kilograms or more of cocaine and 50 kilograms or more of marijuana in Glynn and Bryan Counties within the Southern District of Georgia, and in Gwinnett County in the Northern District of Georgia. The penalty for the conspiracy count (count one) includes imprisonment for not less than 10 years nor more than life and a potential fine of up to \$4,000,000.00. In a separate count, the United States seeks to forfeit any property obtained as a result of the drug conspiracy and any property used or intended to be used to facilitate the conspiracy. This property includes \$175,720.00 in United States currency seized on March 5, 2008 which the government alleged in the indictment that was intended by the defendants to be used as purchase money for approximately ten (10) kilograms of cocaine on March 4 and March 5, 2008. Approximately 10 kilograms of cocaine were seized by agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration on March 5, 2008 in Gwinnett County. The cocaine was destined for Glynn County.

The second indictment charges Rafeal Lateef Baker, age 33, with two counts of distributing cocaine hydrochloride and with two counts of distributing 5 grams or more of cocaine base. These latter charges carry a statutory penalty of not less than 5 years and not more than 40 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$2,000,000.00. Baker faces imprisonment of up to twenty years on the cocaine hydrochloride charges. Baker lives in the Brunswick area.

The majority of the unlawful activity alleged in the indictments took place in Glynn County. Booth noted that all three defendants are scheduled to appear in the United States District Court in Brunswick on April 10, 2008 for arraignment. Sheffield and Gutierrez are being held without bail pending trial. A detention hearing will be held for Baker on April 10, 2008.

The arrests and indictment are the culmination of a joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bryan County Sheriff's Department, the Glynn County Police Department, and the Brunswick Police Department. Mr. Booth and Rodney G. Benson, Special Agent- in-Charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division, praised the efforts of all the agencies involved and stated that "successful investigations such as these are the result of great cooperation between federal and state law enforcement agencies."

Mr. Booth stressed that the indictments are only accusations and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial, in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

XXXXX

40-08