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**FIRST DEFENDANT SENTENCED OUT OF THIRTEEN CHARGED IN
LARGE SCALE DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION**

Lafayette, La.: United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that Damien Edward James Victor, 30, of Lafayette, La., was sentenced late yesterday afternoon to 16 years in prison and five years supervised release following imprisonment, for his involvement in a large scale conspiracy to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute cocaine base and cocaine in the Lafayette, La. area. The sentence was handed down by U.S. District Judge Rebecca F. Doherty in federal court in Lafayette, La.

Damien Victor and 12 co-defendants were indicted in December of 2009 on a variety of drug trafficking and firearms charges, along with the unlawful use of communication facilities and maintaining drug-involved premises. According to court documents, the 13 defendants involved in this drug trafficking organization were responsible for distributing kilograms of cocaine and cocaine base or "crack." A lengthy investigation conducted jointly by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies focused on activity within the Truman neighborhood area within Lafayette.

The leader of the organization, Martin Victor, Jr., and his co-conspirators purchased large amounts of cocaine and cocaine base from known suppliers, and after acquiring or manufacturing the cocaine base or "crack," Martin Victor would supply co-conspirators with the cocaine base for further distribution at various locations within the Lafayette area. Additionally, over \$50,000.00 in U.S. currency, alleged to be drug proceeds, has been seized and will also be sought under the forfeiture count.

The other eleven defendants have previously pled guilty, with one remaining defendant scheduled for trial on February 6, 2012. The sentencing dates have not yet been scheduled.

United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley stated, "This investigation revealed a complex drug trafficking network whose primary interest was distribution of cocaine and cocaine base ("crack"). Members of this criminal organization were involved in an illegal scheme to manufacture and distribute cocaine base ("crack") into the Lafayette area. They were responsible for distributing multiple kilograms of cocaine and cocaine base ("crack"). This sentence should send a strong message that there is a serious price to pay if you choose to make a career out of drug trafficking."

This case was investigated by the FBI South Central Louisiana Safe Streets Gang Task Force which is comprised of agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Lafayette Resident Agency, Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Police Department, Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Office and St. Landry Parish Sheriff's Office. Additional assistance was provided by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Lafayette Metro Narcotics Unit, Lafayette Police Department Action Unit, and the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Department Star Team.

The case is being prosecuted by United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley and Assistant United States Attorney Myers P. Namie.

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