



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

Acting United States Attorney Andrew T. Baxter announced this week that a jury seated before United States District Judge Gary L. Sharpe found **JOHN VanHOESEN, a/k/a Johnny Cat**, age 31 of Albany, New York, guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribute more than fifty grams of crack cocaine. In addition, **VanHOESEN** was found guilty of three (3) counts of possession with intent to distribute a total of more than 5 grams of crack cocaine on September 10 and September 11, 2006 in Albany. **VanHOESEN** faces a mandatory term of life imprisonment when he is sentenced on May 14, 2009.

This was the 30<sup>th</sup> and final defendant to be found guilty in the racketeering and drug conspiracy prosecution of the Jungle Junkies gang, a violent street gang which operated in the Arbor Hill area of Albany, New York. **VanHOESEN** was the only defendant to go to trial; the others entered guilty pleas. Eighteen of those defendants have been sentenced by Judge Sharpe.

This prosecution resulted from a joint investigation conducted by the Office of the United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York; the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Albany Field Division; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives; the Drug Enforcement Administration, Albany District Office; the City of Albany Police Department; the Albany County Sheriff's Department; the Rensselaer County Sheriff's Department; the New York State Department of Corrections; the New York State Division of Parole; and the New York State Police, with the assistance of the United States Marshal, Albany Office; the Albany County District Attorney's Office; the Rensselaer County District Attorney's Office; the Town of Guilderland Police Department; the Town of

Bethlehem Police Department; and the City of Cohoes Police Department.

Acting United States Attorney Andrew T. Baxter remarked that “This prosecution was successful because it combined the resources of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in a successful effort to combat Albany’s gang violence problem and identify and remove the City’s most violent individuals.” In particular, he commended the substantial contributions of the Albany Police Department in sharing information and manpower with federal authorities so that the case could be effectively and swiftly prosecuted.

FBI Special Agent-In-Charge John F. Pikus stated that “this investigation is a great example of how law enforcement cooperation can benefit the citizenry by taking violent criminals off the streets.”

DEA Special Agent in Charge John P. Gilbride stated, “This conviction marks the end of the ‘Jungle Junkies’ drug trafficking organization based in the Arbor Hill area of Albany. Federal, local and state law enforcement combined our resources in order to successfully investigate, arrest and prosecute those who used violent means in order to perpetuate the distribution of illegal narcotics in this community. Today, the citizens of Arbor Hill can rest easier knowing that the Jungle Junkies are behind bars, where they belong.”

Albany Police Chief James Tuffey noted that “Today’s announcement of the last conviction in the Jungle Junkies case marks a successful conclusion to the investigation of a street gang that plagued the streets of Albany. The cooperative effort of the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies was instrumental in making the streets of Albany that much safer today and I commend the men and woman involved in the operation.”

Albany Mayor Gerald D. Jennings said, “I am extremely pleased with this week’s guilty verdict and announcement about the last conviction in connection with a gang that afflicted the

neighborhoods of Albany. Public Safety has always been and will continue to be my highest priority and cooperative criminal investigation initiatives similar to this are instrumental to making every citizen of Albany safe. We must continue to be vigilant in our efforts to deter and suppress any gang activity or criminal enterprise that exists in the Capital Region.”

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