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**LEADER OF "SATAN'S SOLDIERS" PLEADS GUILTY TO
OPERATING CLANDESTINE METHAMPHETAMINE
LABORATORY LOCATED NEXT TO BRONX PUBLIC SCHOOL**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ANGELO CRUZ, the leader of a motorcycle gang calling itself the "Satan's Soldiers," pled guilty yesterday to operating a clandestine methamphetamine lab in the Bronx. Specifically, CRUZ pled guilty to participating in the operation of the lab from September 2002, until December 2002, when law enforcement seized the lab and arrested other members of the gang.

According to criminal complaints previously filed in the case, CRUZ was, until his arrest, the leader of the Satan's Soldiers motorcycle gang, which operated a methamphetamine laboratory in a Bronx lot located across the street from a New York City elementary school. In addition to producing methamphetamine at that location, the gang stored a small arsenal of weapons and ammunition there.

Methamphetamine is a controlled substance which, until recently, has been primarily abused in the Southwestern and

Western United States. It is typically manufactured in clandestine laboratories located in that region, as well as in Mexico. Because the chemicals used in clandestine methamphetamine labs are explosive and often poisonous, such operations can present a significant danger to the surrounding community.

According to the criminal complaints filed in this case, law enforcement agents learned in December 2002 that the clandestine lab was located in a lot at 1290 Beach Avenue in the Bronx (the "Lot") which was run b'y the "Satan's Soldiers" gang. Upon searching the Lot, which is located across the street from Community School 47, the agents discovered a trailer containing what appeared to be a fully operational methamphetamine lab. In a second trailer, the agents found guns and ammunition, including an Intertec Tec-9 with a defaced serial number, two magazine cartridges, and 47 live rounds of ammunition, as well as a black shotgun along with 17 live 12-gauge shotgun shells.

According to the criminal complaints filed in this case, video cameras were found stationed on and around the Lot, apparently for the purpose of detecting law enforcement. Video monitors connected to the cameras were found in a rear building structure on the lot, which served as the gang's clubhouse and headquarters. In the clubhouse, agents also found various weapons including a loaded Mossburg pistol grip shotgun, a Remington .22 caliber handgun, four 12-gauge shotgun shells, four gun silencers, six knives, a taser gun, a slingshot, and a pair

of brass knuckles. The agents also found more than \$43,000 in cash.

Five members of the Satan's Soldiers were indicted in the Southern District of New York for their involvement in running the methamphetamine lab. ANGELO CRUZ is the fifth and highest ranking member of the gang to plead guilty to charges arising from operation of the lab. CRUZ, 37, was initially arrested in January 2003. CRUZ faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment. The Honorable Barbara S. Jones, United States District Judge, has scheduled sentencing for February 18, 2005.

NICHOLAS BARLETTI, RALPH WALTER HALL, PETER SCHULTZ, and JOHN WILLIAM KELLY have also pleaded guilty to charges arising from the operation of the methamphetamine lab. BARLETTI, 51, and HALL, 37, have both pled guilty and are awaiting sentencing. They each face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment.

SCHULTZ, 53, was sentenced to 78 months' imprisonment and was ordered to forfeit \$40,000 in drug proceeds that were seized at the time of his arrest. KELLY, 61, was sentenced to 46 months' imprisonment.

Mr. KELLEY praised the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York City Police Department, and the Bronx District

Attorney's Office for their outstanding work and cooperation in this case.

Assistant United States Attorney BENJAMIN LAWSKY is in charge of the case.

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