



PRESS NOTICE

BILL NETTLES
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

1441 Main Street, Suite 500 * Columbia, SC 29201 * (803) 929-3000

August 1, 2012

For Immediate Release

Contact: AUSA Sean Kittrell
843-266-1668

LAST DEFENDANT IN EAST SIDE POSSE GANG CASE PLEADS GUILTY

Charleston, South Carolina – United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated today that the last defendant in a City of Charleston gang case pled guilty in Federal Court, before the Honorable P. Michael Duffy. The case ultimately involved a forty-five (45) count indictment, naming Calvin Levar Dixon, a/k/a “Booga”, a/k/a Calvin Dion; Michael Angelo Hayes, a/k/a “Little Mike”, a/k/a “Mikey”, a/k/a Ricky Lamont Hayes; Arnold Terrell Bellinger, a/k/a “A-1”; Jamile Raynod Harley, a/k/a “Miles”, a/k/a “Mile”, a/k/a “Tall Mile”; George Avery Bellinger, a/k/a “Lil George”, a/k/a “Lil G”, a/k/a “G”; Kevin Lemort Coaxum, a/k/a “Blizz”; Iman Gantt, a/k/a “I”, a/k/a Imam Gantt, a/k/a Imen Gantt; Kadrin Christopher Simmons, a/k/a “Little Black”; Laquell Takeem Dixon, a/k/a “Quelly”, a/k/a “Q-Nuts”, a/k/a “Q”; Kenneth Bernard Brown, a/k/a “Numsey”; Shabazz Romell Wise, a/k/a “Little Bazz”; Montrell Sharife Wise, a/k/a “Trell”; Tony Brown; Walter Demeatrus Brown, a/k/a “Cook-a-Rooka”; and Charles Fabers, a/k/a Charles Fabers, Jr., a/k/a Junior Fabers, a/k/a Charles Fabes, a/k/a Charles Favors. The prosecution alleged that all were members of a criminal street gang known as “ESP” or the “East Side Posse.” This is a criminal street gang which operated in downtown Charleston in a neighborhood near a fast food restaurant on Meeting Street. The ESP territory had included Duc’s Court, Line Street, Sheppard Street, Hanover Street, and

Columbus Street. Drug markets operated at different locations. At least one location was regarded as an open air drug market.

The prosecution noted in various court proceedings that gang members conspired to distribute over a kilogram of gram of heroin as well as more than 280 grams of “crack” cocaine, in addition to selling marijuana. They also used various places on the East Side of Charleston (including residences or stores located in the neighborhood) to either manufacture or distribute drugs.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Kittrell and Special Assistant United States Attorney Linder, the East Side Posse is one of a number of different criminal “street gangs” that has operated in the downtown area. In order to address this criminal activity and to identify the complex distribution network, a joint federal, state, and local law enforcement team made a series of buys of heroin and crack which targeted street level dealers in an eight (8) block area of Charleston.

Investigators learned that many of the defendants grew up together in the same neighborhood and began selling drugs together in the Johnson Street area in the late 90’s. They later moved their operation to the neighborhood surrounding Duc’s Court. Part of the group (Michael Hayes, Kevin Coaxum, Kadron Simmons, Iman Gantt and others) began dealing out of Duc’s Court, which was used as a distribution outlet until a police raid on May 29, 2009. When police raided the house, they found Kevin Coaxum and Iman Gantt inside, along with about one hundred and seventy-two (172) grams of crack, one hundred fifty-eight (158) grams of marijuana; a grinder (for marijuana packaging and distribution); several scales; a GE Turntable microwave oven and Pyrex cups, all with cocaine residue (for cooking crack);

and a Hi-Point 9mm semi-automatic handgun which had been used as a house gun to protect drug dealing activities.

As a result of that search, the defendants moved their drug distribution operation from Duc's Court. Some began operating from Hanover Street. A number of undercover buys were conducted at this location and sales continued until August 11, 2009, when a search warrant raid was conducted. Michael Hayes was outside the abandoned residence. Inside, officers recovered a Norinco SKS 7.62 x 39 caliber assault rifle, a Hi-Point 9mm semi-automatic handgun, a Hi-Point .380 caliber handgun, eighty three (83) wax paper "bindles" of heroin, four hundred and sixty (460) grams of marijuana, and a scale.

After the raid, the Hanover address was no longer used as a point of sale. In fact, in October of 2009, investigators tried to conduct an undercover buy operation and the confidential informant was instructed to go to an address on Columbus as "people were not allowed at ... Hanover anymore".

A number of undercover buys of crack were also made from the area around a local grocery store on the East Side. Some witnesses described having witnessed an open air drug market and street dealers selling to as many as 40 or more customers each.

The Assistant United States Attorney noted in court proceedings that ESP was sophisticated in terms of marketing its sales of heroin. That drug is often sold in Charleston in small wax paper wrapped packets. These are called bindles and usually sell for \$20 each. ESP began selling these at the lower price of \$10 a bindle, which became to law enforcement a signature for ESP street dealers.

United States Attorney Nettles noted that the investigation was a success because federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies worked closely together as a unified team. “This essentially is what can happen when everyone works in tandem. Instead of separate agencies working on different cases with each one viewed as single unrelated investigation, a greater community impact is obtained when efforts are combined, information is shared, resources are united, and decisions are made together. I commend the City of Charleston Police Department, the Ninth Circuit Solicitor’s Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.” Mr. Nettles noted that Assistant Solicitor Stephanie Linder of the Ninth Judicial Circuit was designated by the United States Department of Justice as a Special Assistant United States Attorney to work with Nettles’ Violent Crime Task Force, and that the City of Charleston Police Department had assigned Jake Grill to the Drug Enforcement Task Force to work on complex investigations. Nettles said these were examples of the joint effort, and commended the efforts of both, additionally noting that Ms. Linder had been instrumental in the great result.

Chief Greg Mullen of the City of Charleston Police Department said that the partnership between the federal agencies and local police is effective. “We are delighted to see the result of our efforts to combat criminal street gangs operating in our community. Our partnership has achieved great results for a community which has been deeply impacted by criminal activity.”

Solicitor Scarlett Wilson said that she was especially pleased with the combined effort and unified command of the investigation. She said her experience as an Assistant United States Attorney convinced her that coordinating state, federal and local efforts produces the

greatest result. “You can’t have a community impact unless the law enforcement community comes together” she noted, stating that “as ever, there is strength in unity.”

Harry S. Sommers, the Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Atlanta Field Division commented “All participating agencies played a crucial role in the eradication of this criminal network. Their drug trafficking activities posed a significant threat to the quality of life in the Charleston, South Carolina area. The dismantling of this organization makes this community safer. I want to thank our federal, state and local law enforcement counterparts, who had a direct impact in making this investigation a success.”

All the agencies pledged continued support. ATF will continue to dedicate whatever resources necessary in the fight against armed violent crime,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Wayne L. Dixie, “Along with our law enforcement partners we will aggressively enforce the laws that hold those violent criminals accountable for their actions.”

CALVIN LEVAR DIXON, a/k/a “Booga”, a/k/a Calvin Dion: Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute a kilogram of heroin, more than 280 grams of crack and more than 500 grams of cocaine, and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs), Count 16 (distribution of heroin on October 20, 2009); Count 17 (distribution of heroin on October 22, 2009)); Count 21 (distribution of crack on November 12, 2009); Count 37 (distribution of heroin on March 21, 2009); and Count 40 (possession of a firearm as a convicted felon on April 22, 2010). Mr. Dixon is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison.

MICHAEL ANGELO HAYES, a/k/a "Little Mike", a/k/a "Mikey", a/k/a Ricky Lamont Hayes: Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute a kilogram of heroin, more than 280 grams of crack and more than 500 grams of cocaine, and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 20 (distribution of heroin on November 12, 2009); Count 24 (distribution of heroin on November 24, 2009); and Count 38 (distribution of heroin on April 1, 2010). Mr. Hayes is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison. Additionally, he is a career offender and under the advisory Federal sentencing guidelines he faces an enhanced sentence.

ARNOLD TERRELL BELLINGER, a/k/a "A-1": Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute a kilogram of heroin, more than 100 grams of heroin and 28 grams of crack, and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs), Count 9 (distribution of heroin on August 5, 2009); Count 13 (distribution of heroin on August 25, 2009); and Count 36 (possession with intent to distribute crack on March 26, 2010). Mr. Bellinger is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison. Additionally, he is a career offender and under the advisory Federal sentencing guidelines he faces an enhanced sentence.

JAMILE RAYNOD HARLEY, a/k/a "Miles", a/k/a "Mile", a/k/a "Tall Mile": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute a kilogram of heroin, more than 280 grams of crack and more than 500 grams of cocaine, and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 20 (distribution of heroin on November 12, 2009); Count 22 (distribution of crack cocaine on November 18, 2009), Count 26 (distribution of crack cocaine on December 4, 2009, along with Kenneth Bernard Brown), and Count 31 (distribution of crack cocaine on January 5, 2010). Mr. Harley is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison.

Additionally, he is a career offender and under the advisory Federal sentencing guidelines he faces an enhanced sentence.

GEORGE AVERY BELLINGER, a/k/a "Lil George", a/k/a "Lil G", a/k/a "G": Pled guilty to Count 30 (distribution of crack cocaine on December 30, 2009); Count 32 (distribution of crack cocaine on January 8, 2010; and Count 44 (possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine on November 4, 2010). Mr. Bellinger is facing a maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison.

KEVIN LEMORT COAXUM, a/k/a "Blizz": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine (more than 28 grams) and marijuana), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs), Count 7 (possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine with Iman Gantt on May 29, 2009). Mr. Coaxum is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison. Additionally, he is a career offender and under the advisory Federal sentencing guidelines he faces an enhanced sentence.

IMAN GANTT, a/k/a "I", a/k/a Imam Gantt, a/k/a Imen Gantt: Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute more than 28 grams of crack cocaine), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 4 (distribution of crack cocaine on May 22, 2009 with Kadrin Simmons); Count 6 (possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime on May 29, 2009); and Count 7 (possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine with Iman Gantt on May 29, 2009). Mr. Gantt is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 15 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison.

KADRIN CHRISTOPHER SIMMONS, a/k/a "Little Black": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine and marijuana), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute

drugs); Count 42 (possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine on May 5, 2010). Mr. Simmons is facing a maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison.

LAQUELL TAKEEM DIXON, a/k/a "Quelly", a/k/a "Q-Nuts", a/k/a "Q": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute more than 28 grams of crack cocaine), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 25 (distribution of crack on November 24, 2009); Count 29 (distribution of crack on December 17, 2009). Mr. Dixon is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison.

KENNETH BERNARD BROWN, a/k/a "Numsey": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine and marijuana), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 26 (distribution of crack on December 4, 2009); Count 27 (distribution of crack on December 9, 2009); Count 28 (distribution of crack on December 16, 2009). Mr. Brown is facing a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison.

SHABAZZ ROMELL WISE, a/k/a "Little Bazz": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute more than 28 grams of crack cocaine), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 34 (distribution of crack on February 11, 2010); Count 45 (distribution of crack on December 17, 2010). Mr. Wise is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison to a maximum of life in prison.

MONTRELL SHARIFE WISE, a/k/a "Trell": Pled guilty to Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute more than 28 grams of crack cocaine), and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 35 (distribution of crack on December 18, 2010); Count 43 (possession of a firearm as a

convicted felon on June 16, 2010). Mr. Wise is facing a mandatory 5 years in federal prison to a maximum of 40 years.

TONY BROWN: Pled guilty to Count 19 (distribution of heroin on November 10, 2009). Mr. Brown is facing a maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison. However, he is a career offender and under the advisory Federal sentencing guidelines he faces an enhanced sentence.

WALTER DEMEATRUS BROWN, a/k/a "Cook-a-Rooka": Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute heroin and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 14 (distribution of heroin on October 13, 2009); Count 15 (distribution of heroin in October 16, 2009); and Count 16 (distribution of heroin on October 20, 2009 with Calvin Dixon). Mr. Brown is facing a maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison. Additionally, he is a career offender and under the advisory Federal sentencing guidelines he faces an enhanced sentence.

and

CHARLES FABERS, a/k/a Charles Fabers, Jr., a/k/a Junior Fabers, a/k/a Charles Fabes, a/k/a Charles Favors: Count 1 (conspiracy to distribute heroin and to use various places in Charleston to manufacture and distribute drugs); Count 18 (distribution of heroin on November 5, 2009); Count 41 (possession with intent to distribute heroin on April 22, 2009). Mr. Fabers is facing a maximum sentence of 30 years in federal prison.

Mr. Nettles said that Assistant United States Attorney Sean Kittrell and Special Assistant United States Attorney Stephanie Linder of the Charleston office were the federal prosecutors responsible for the investigation and prosecution of the case.

#####