



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“OPERATION EVIL EYE” LEADS TO INDICTMENT OF 31 INDIVIDUALS

LITTLE ROCK – Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas; along with William J. Bryant, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Little Rock District Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); and Phil Durham, Special Agent in Charge of the New Orleans Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); announced today a sweep of arrests in Prairie and Lonoke Counties stemming from a twenty-eight count indictment involving drugs and firearms offenses. That indictment, which was returned by a federal grand jury last week, remained under seal until today’s arrests. Taken into custody were 8 of the named defendants; 23 additional defendants will be summoned to appear in court at a later date. The indictment charges 29 of the 31 defendants with conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute methamphetamine and marijuana in the Central Arkansas area.

The charges stem from a two-year state and federal Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation operationally dubbed “Evil Eye.” The investigation, which primarily focused on methamphetamine trafficking in the Des Arc and Ward, Arkansas areas, was initiated by the DEA at the request of the Prairie County Sheriff’s Office and the Des Arc Police Department. The investigation resulted in the seizure of significant quantities of methamphetamine and marijuana, as well as the seizure of more than a dozen firearms.

Chris Berry, Mark Calhoun, Barry Devore, Benjamin Eans, Stephen Edwards, Joseph Lewis, Paul Paulman, and Rae Putt were arrested in today’s round-up, which was conducted by the United States Marshals Service, DEA, ATF, Arkansas State Police, Prairie County Sheriff’s Office, and the Des Arc Police Department. All will appear before United States Magistrate Judge H. David Young for plea and arraignment on March 10, 2010, at 3:30 p.m. The remaining defendants will appear before Judge Young for plea and arraignment on March 25, 2010. The lead defendant, Norman Berry, is currently incarcerated.

“Through cooperative law enforcement efforts like Operation Evil Eye, we are seeing some real progress in the fight against illegal drugs,” Duke stated. She added, “As this indictment demonstrates, large-scale drug trafficking is not just a problem in the urban areas of our State. And, as we take this fight out into the counties, full cooperation between and among all levels and branches of law enforcement becomes essential. It is frequently the local officers and drug task forces that know the full extent of their problems and have the best insight of how to address those problems. Oftentimes, it is the federal authorities that have the needed resources and manpower to tackle the situation. It is only through combining all these elements that we are able to successfully dismantle broad-based drug trafficking organizations such as this.”

Sheriff Gary Burnett of the Prairie County Sheriff’s Office stated, “The Prairie County Sheriff’s Office and the Des Arc Police Department sought the assistance of state and federal authorities to combat the drug trade and associated crimes in our area. Due to our rural location and limited manpower, this has been extremely helpful in our battle against the drug problem that plagues our county.”

ASAC Bryant added, “This operation was a textbook example of true multi-agency federal, state, and local coordination.”

The investigation was conducted by the United States Attorney’s Office, DEA, ATF, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigations Division, Arkansas State Police, Prairie County Sheriff’s Office, Des Arc Police Department, Carlisle Police Department, Hazen Police Department, Prairie County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, and Lonoke County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Julie Peters.

An indictment contains only allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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See two-page attachment for specific information in individual defendants.

<u>Name</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Age</u>
Norman Berry	Des Arc, AR	51
Paul Paulman	Ward, AR	45
Amanda Berry	Des Arc, AR	29
Chris Berry	Jacksonville, AR	36
Recho Berry	Des Arc, AR	24
Mark Calhoun	Des Arc, AR	49
Shelby Calhoun	Des Arc, AR	26
Robert Cawthorne	Des Arc, AR	34
Barry Devore	Des Arc, AR	41
Benjamin Eans	Griffithville, AR	23
Stephen Edwards	Beebe, AR	45
William Todd Fetters	Des Arc, AR	45
Andrew Horn	Des Arc, AR	23
James Houghtlen	Des Arc, AR	46
Joseph Lewis	Des Arc, AR	28
Tabatha McCoy	Des Arc, AR	39
Ray McVay	Des Arc, AR	27
Darbin Moye	Griffithville, AR	42
Mario Oliver	Jacksonville, AR	20
Cindy Paulman	Ward, AR	46
Ricky Plummer	Des Arc, AR	37
Rae Putt	Cabot, AR	36

Alberto Ramirez	Mercedes, TX	36
Corey Robinson	Des Arc, AR	35
James Robinson	Des Arc, AR	38
Keith Robinson	Des Arc, AR	21
Gustavo Rodriguez-Contreras	Donna, TX	36
Jeremy Tallent	Ward, AR	32
James Tracy	Ward, AR	34
James Thompson	Des Arc, AR	45
Susan Winkler	Griffithville, AR	56

Conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute more than five hundred grams of a mixture containing methamphetamine carries a possible punishment of no less than ten years and up to life imprisonment, and a fine of up to \$4 million.

Distribution and possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine carries a possible punishment of no less than five years, and up to forty years imprisonment, and a fine of up to \$2 million, if the quantity of mixture containing methamphetamine is greater than fifty grams; and a possible punishment of up to twenty years imprisonment, and a fine of up to \$1 million, for quantities of a mixture containing methamphetamine less than fifty grams.

The possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime carries a possible punishment of no less than five years and up to life imprisonment, and up to a \$250,000 fine.

Possession of a firearm by a felon carries a possible punishment of not more than ten years imprisonment, and up to a \$250,000 fine, unless the defendant has three previous convictions for a violent felony or serious drug offense, in which case, the possible punishment is not less than fifteen years, and up to life imprisonment, and up to a \$250,000 fine.

Misprision of a felony carries a possible punishment of not more than three years imprisonment and up to a \$250,000 fine.

An indictment contains only allegations. Each defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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