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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY JUNE 22, 2011
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THIRTY-EIGHT ALLEGED MEMBERS, SUPPLIERS AND CUSTOMERS OF CHICAGO-BASED INTERSTATE NARCOTICS RING FACING FEDERAL CHARGES

CHICAGO — Thirty-eight defendants in three states are facing federal narcotics charges here and in Ohio as a result of an investigation of an alleged Chicago-based heroin and cocaine drug-trafficking organization by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Chicago Police Department, law enforcement officials announced today. While the investigation initially focused on the Chicago-based distribution ring, it expanded to include an alleged significant higher-level supply network, as well as downline wholesale customers in Chicago, Cincinnati and New York who obtained narcotics from the Chicago-based group and others. Twenty defendants were arrested yesterday in Chicago, four in Cincinnati and one in Laredo, Tex. Thirty-six of the 38 defendants are charged in Chicago, while two are facing federal charges filed in Cincinnati.

Between March 2010 and yesterday, Chicago police and DEA agents seized more than 15.5 kilograms of heroin, seven kilograms of cocaine, more than \$1 million, seven automobiles, and two firearms as part of the investigation, which is continuing. Officers and agents executed search warrants yesterday at the residences of six defendants stretching from the far south side to the north side of the city.

DEA agents and the police department's narcotics units and organized crime division began investigating the alleged Chicago-based drug ring known as the Blount-Bridges Drug-Trafficking Organization, allegedly run by defendants **Domingo Blount** and **Gabriel Bridges**. The investigation included at least five alleged heroin purchases by an undercover Chicago police officer, wiretaps on 16 telephones, extensive surveillance and seizures of narcotics and drug proceeds. Investigators learned that the Blount-Bridges organization obtained heroin and cocaine from several different sources of supply, including a significant alleged conspiracy run by co-defendant **Arturo Flores**, and then distributed the drugs to wholesale customers in Chicago, Cincinnati and elsewhere, according to the charges.

Thirty-four defendants were charged in six separate criminal complaints that were unsealed or filed yesterday and today in U.S. District Court in Chicago. Two other defendants charged in Chicago were arrested and indicted earlier this month. The defendants arrested in Chicago yesterday appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Martin Ashman and remain in federal custody pending detention hearings beginning Friday and continuing next week.

Four Chicago defendants and three who live in Cincinnati, but are facing charges here, are fugitives.

"This case is part of a sustained, coordinated effort by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to disrupt Chicago's highly-organized drug-trafficking organizations. Cases such as this occur because dedicated police officers and federal agents routinely work together with prosecutors to disrupt the distribution of heroin and cocaine destined for Chicago and other cities," said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges together with Jack Riley, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and Garry F. McCarthy, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department. The U.S. Marshals Service assisted with the arrests, and the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Southern District of Ohio and the Southern District of Texas assisted in the investigation. The investigation is being conducted under the umbrella of U.S. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

"DEA is committed to scouring drug traffickers from our communities, which includes targeting street level distribution networks to wholesale suppliers that have ties to foreign sources of supply," said Mr. Riley. "As a committed member of law enforcement, we understand that quality of life issues revolve around the drug dealers on corners whose presence is not acceptable to law-abiding residents who live, work and go to school in the area. At the same time, we must track down the suppliers of foreign-produced drugs and their ties to international sources to fully expose the depth of drug-trafficking. In this investigation, a full spectrum of investigative tools was utilized to uproot this alleged drug-trafficking organization at multiple levels," he added.

Superintendent McCarthy said: "The joint efforts in this investigation highlight the far-reaching impact of law enforcement partnerships. The Chicago Police Department will continue to work in tandem with our partners to identify and dismantle criminal operations which are a source of significant criminal activity in our communities."

According to the multiple complaint affidavits, the Blount-Bridges organization allegedly obtained multi-kilogram supplies of heroin and cocaine from several drug-trafficking organizations, including the Flores network and others operated by defendants **Angel Hernandez** and **Fernando Acevedo-Fitz**. The Blount-Bridges ring, in turn, allegedly distributed narcotics to wholesale

customers, including defendants **Jerry Spann** and **Jarvin Graham** in Chicago, as well as customers in Cincinnati who were charged either there or in Chicago.

The affidavits, which total several hundred pages combined, detail numerous alleged transactions in which various amounts of heroin and cocaine were tracked through undercover purchases and controlled seizures. The charging documents trace the movement of narcotics and proceeds through excerpts of the defendants' numerous, intercepted telephone conversations.

For example, on May 16, 2011, Chicago police and DEA agents seized nearly 10 kilograms of heroin from two duffel bags during an investigative stop and two defendants, **Timoteo Torres-Tellez** and **Bernado Tellez**, were arrested just before they allegedly delivered a portion of the heroin to Flores and his organization. Later that night, agents intercepted an unidentified man telling Flores about the seizure and arrests and urging him to get rid of his telephone since one of the men arrested had Flores's number in his phone. Because of the seizure, the unidentified man told Flores they should wait a couple of days to get more heroin, specifically "tomorrow or the day after" before resuming their alleged drug-dealing. Speaking to a different man the next day, Flores blamed the seizure on the fact that Torres-Tellez and Tellez were both young men and probably acted nervously. Flores had no idea at the time that the seizure and arrests resulted from the wiretap on his own cell phone, which also allowed agents to monitor his subsequent conversations.

In another episode, one complaint alleges that the Blount-Bridges organization arranged to supply a half-kilogram of heroin to co-defendant **Myron Grisby** in Cincinnati in June 2010. The heroin was transported by having co-defendant **Omeisha Crusoe** and others drive a GMC Yukon Denali equipped with a hidden compartment. Law enforcement officers seized the heroin following a traffic stop near Merrillville, Ind., and intercepted Blount, Grisby and Crusoe allegedly discussing

the events surrounding the stop and seizure. Blount insisted that law enforcement would not find the heroin because he never used the vehicle's hidden compartment near the passenger side airbag, according to the affidavit. However, after the traffic stop, the vehicle was towed to an Indiana State Police garage, where a drug-sniffing dog, "Blackie," indicated the presence of narcotics between the captains' seats in the middle row of the vehicle. Further inspection revealed a separate secret compartment in the interior roof of the vehicle, which contained two packages totaling 428.4 grams of heroin, the charges allege.

The defendants were charged with various narcotics distribution counts. Most face penalties ranging between a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison to a maximum of life in prison and a \$4 million fine. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Sheri Mecklenburg, Marny Zimmer, William Ridgway and Bolling Haxall.

The public is reminded that complaints contain only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

A list of the federal defendants follows (with best known ages, and all reside in Chicago unless noted otherwise):

| <u>CASE NO.</u> | <u>DEFENDANT</u> | <u>AGE</u> | <u>TOWN</u> | <u>STATUS</u> |
|-----------------------|---|------------|----------------|---------------|
| 11 CR 415 | Fernando Acevedo-Marchan | 47 | | Arrested |
| | Alshawntus Beck | 37 | | Arrested |
| | Domingo Blount | 37 | | Arrested |
| | Lamar Blount | 41 | | Arrested |
| | Gabriel Bridges | 42 | | Arrested |
| | Demetrius Cole | 36 | | Arrested |
| | Omeshia Crusoe | 26 | | Arrested |
| | Armando Fernandez | 33 | | Arrested |
| | Arturo Flores | 35 | | Arrested |
| | Rubin Garcia | 25 | Laredo, Tex. | Arrested |
| | Myron Grisby | 28 | Cincinnati | Fugitive |
| | Angel Hernandez | 51 | | Fugitive |
| | Gerardo Hernandez | 33 | Cicero | Arrested |
| | Jose Herrera | 41 | | Arrested |
| | Richard Hopkins | 61 | | Arrested |
| | Ranulfo Soberanis-Campos | 30 | | Arrested |
| | Charles Thomas | 41 | | Fugitive |
| Bernardo Tellez | 35 | | Arrested 5/16 | |
| Timoteo Torres-Tellez | 23 | | Arrested 5/16 | |
| 11 CR 416 | Fernando Acevedo-Fitz | 64 | | Arrested |
| | Edna Feliciano | 48 | | Arrested |
| | Louis Gambino | 34 | | In custody |
| | FNU LNU, a/k/a "Grenas," (later identified as Victor Hernandez Labarena) | | | Arrested |
| | Javon Johnson | 33 | | Arrested |
| | Gonzalo Rodriguez | 42 | | Arrested |
| | | | | |
| 11 CR 417 | Rashawn Crawford | 24 | Cincinnati | Fugitive |
| | Jarvin Graham | 29 | | Fugitive |
| | Reginald Brandon Savage | 27 | Cincinnati | Fugitive |
| | Jerry Spann | 38 | | Fugitive |
| | George Reese Thomas | 34 | Cincinnati | Arrested |
| | Laguada Thomas | 35 | Cincinnati | Arrested |
| 11 CR 424 | John C. Mixon | 33 | Evergreen Park | |
| 11 CR 426 | Jesus Motino Gutierrez | 50 | | Arrested |
| 11 CR 427 | Jesus Serrano Lorenzana | 41 | | Arrested |

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|-----------|----------------|----|------------|
| 11 CR 346 | Alejandro Soto | 32 | In custody |
| | Luis Contreras | 39 | In custody |

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