



U. S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Mississippi

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DEFENDANTS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHWEST MISSISSIPPI CHARGED IN MULTI -POUND METHAMPHETAMINE CONSPIRACY

Jackson, Miss - Acting United States Attorney Stan Harris, Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics Director Marshall Fisher, Drug Enforcement Administration New Orleans Field Division Special Agent in Charge Jimmy S. Fox III, (DEA) Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Joel K. Reece, Rankin County (District 20) District Attorney Michael Guest, and Pike County (District 14) District Attorney Dee Bates announce the culmination of a one year joint federal and state investigation targeting a large methamphetamine distribution organization operating in the State of Mississippi and elsewhere.

Members of this organization imported into and distributed up to 50 pounds of methamphetamine per month during the course of this conspiracy. Until today, this organization was the largest identified methamphetamine distribution enterprise operating in the State of Mississippi. It was a highly structured criminal organization that has a demonstrated history of violence to facilitate its drug trafficking activities.

On June 23, 2009, teams of state, local, and federal law enforcement officers arrested numerous defendants and executed multiple search warrants at locations in Walthall, Lincoln, Pike, Marion, Hinds, and Rankin Counties. Related enforcement operations were also conducted in Florida and Alabama today. The arrests were the result of a joint investigation between the DEA Jackson Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Enforcement Group, and the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics.

Also participating in the investigation were: the Lincoln, Marion, Pike, Rankin, and Walthall County Sheriff's Departments, the Brandon, Pearl, Richland, Florence and Ridgeland, Mississippi Police Departments, Hinds County (District 7) District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith, and Marion County (District 15) District Attorney Hal Kitrell.

U.S. Marshal Nehemiah Flowers and the U.S. Marshal Service Gulf Coast Fugitive Force were also recognized for their assistance in arresting those indicted as part of the operation.

As a result of this investigation agents seized numerous pounds of methamphetamine with a street value exceeding 1.5 million dollars. Also seized were 5 vehicles (two of which had hidden compartments), 2 stolen motorcycles, 2 stolen 4-wheelers, over 50 firearms at least one of which is believed to be a fully automatic assault rifle, and 3 silencers. Additional arrests/indictments are anticipated as this investigation continues.

Acting U.S. Attorney Stan Harris praised the cooperative efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement. Harris noted that methamphetamine is one of the most highly addictive of all narcotics, and its production and distribution rank among the most destructive criminal enterprises in the State of Mississippi.

DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge of Mississippi Joel Reece stated that, "this investigation and subsequent arrests of these individuals resulted in the complete dismantlement of a sophisticated drug trafficking organization responsible for the distribution of significant quantities of methamphetamine into Mississippi. This success can be attributed to an outstanding partnership between DEA and our state and local counterparts combined with guidance and aggressive prosecution from the United States Attorneys Office for the Southern District of Mississippi, and the aforementioned District Attorneys."

MBN Director Marshall Fisher stated that "this violent organization has operated with impunity for some time, and is responsible for distributing multi-pound quantities of Mexican methamphetamine over a significant period of time. We believe the arrests and successful prosecution of this entire organization will significantly impact the availability of this highly addictive illicit narcotic in the state of Mississippi.

Fisher added that "this investigation has been a team effort from its initiation. The tireless efforts of agents and prosecutors in this investigation have resulted in what may be the most significant blow to methamphetamine distribution in the history of Mississippi drug enforcement. To have simultaneous multi federal and state charges in so many different areas of our state is an indicator of the significance of the accomplishments in this investigation."

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.

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