

NEWS

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Middleman Between Two Major Camden Drug Gangs Sentenced To 164 Months in Federal Prison for Cocaine Distribution

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CAMDEN – A middleman between two major Camden drug gangs was sentenced to 164 months in federal prison today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute more than 50 kilograms of cocaine, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas also ordered Ismael Zayas, 39, of Camden, to serve five years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term.

Zayas pleaded guilty before Judge Irenas on April 20, 2009, to one count of conspiring with Raymond Morales and others to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute five or more kilograms of powder cocaine, and 50 grams or more of crack cocaine.

On May 31, 2007, law enforcement officials acknowledged for the first time that Camden drug leader Raymond Morales pleaded guilty in July 2005, admitting at that time that he contracted out six murders and the attempted murder of a witness. Authorities stated that Morales, 38, of Camden, had been cooperating with law enforcement authorities since before his guilty plea.

According to the Indictment to which Zayas pleaded guilty, Morales did not deal directly with drug leaders whom either he did not trust or he considered dangerous. Therefore, Morales used middlemen to supply cocaine to certain drug gangs.

At his plea hearing, Zayas admitted that since he was childhood friends with Troy Clark, Trevor Smith, and Jermaine Coleman, who were the leaders of a major drug-trafficking gang known as the “M.O.B. Boys,” he began acting as a middleman between Morales and the MOB Boys in the middle of 2001. Zayas admitted that he continued to purchase multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine from Morales and resold the cocaine to the MOB Boys until Morales' arrest in early 2003.

According to the Indictment, from the middle of 2001 until early 2003, the MOB Boys purchased over 50 kilograms of cocaine from Zayas. The MOB Boys operated an open air drug market in the middle of the 1200 block of Morton Street in Camden. Clark, Coleman and Smith have each pleaded guilty to drug distribution charges and await sentencing.

Morales pleaded guilty on July 27, 2005, to a nine-count Superseding Information. The Superseding Information, which was unsealed on May 9, 2007, charged Morales with six counts of ordering a murder in the furtherance of a Continuing Criminal Enterprise (“CCE”); one count of witness tampering by ordering the attempted murder of a witness; one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute over 500 grams of cocaine; and one count of being a principal administrator of a CCE that operated in Camden. Morales is awaiting sentencing.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Irenas consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing

Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited the Special Agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, in Newark, and Investigators with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Unit, under the direction of Prosecutor Warren W. Faulk, with the investigation of Morales' drug organization.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Howard Wiener and Diana V. Carrig of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Michael Paul, Esq. Metuchen