



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian  
Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 8, 2011

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nyn>

CONTACT: Richard S. Hartunian  
(518) 431-0247

## **COORDINATED LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS** **MAKE ALBANY STREETS SAFER**

Over the course of the last few years, the coordinated efforts of a number of law enforcement agencies have led to the dismantling of two violent organizations in the City of Albany, and sent their members to federal prison. As a result, the City is now a safer place. These organizations or gangs were known as the Original Gangsta Killers (OGK) or "Downtown" gang, and the Jungle Junkies, or "Uptown" gang. Not only were the members of these two gangs responsible for the distribution of substantial quantities of crack and marijuana in the City, but in order to control and protect their territories, gang members committed armed robberies, assaults, and drive-by shootings, including shootings of rival gang members, and traveled to other states to obtain firearms which they brought back to Albany.

Federal, state and local law enforcement officers initially targeted the illegal activities of the Jungle Junkies. Members of this gang were charged with violating federal Racketeering Influenced And Corrupt Organizations (RICO) and drug conspiracy laws. In 2006, thirty Jungle Junkies gang members or associates were charged, convicted and sentenced: Ernest Conley, Mark Lewis, Shatia Wright, Tracy Battle, Keymon Dobbs, Alan Skorupski, Kamar Harrison, John Welcom, Lavar Houtman, Kahlil Barnes, Rahmel Carter, Amin Cowan, Anthony Fenner, Ahmad Fleming, Rayquinshawn Harrison, Takeem Heath, Lamel Inman, Kali Johnson,

Deaunta Malloy, Santonieto Miller, Jr., Ramaah Milner, Lajuan Morales, Kemiek Payne, Shabar Perkins, Taron Robinson, Elquan Sturdivant, Shameek K. Thomas, John VanHoesen, Joshua VanHoesen and Shaheem White. In 2009, twenty-five OGK members or associates were charged with similar crimes, and all have pled guilty. They are: Terrence Anthony, Elijah Cancer, Mundhir Conor, Wister J. Farmer, Eric D. Foster, Owen Z. Furthman, Justin P. Gaddy, Ladawn H. Harris, Anairian R. Kittle, Michelle P. Knickerbocker, Kwon S. Lilliard, Kolby J. Martin, Jomeek L. McNeal, Winfield C. Nicholson, Alfonso Parker, Marcel D. Perry, Kenyan D. Poole, Dushawn J. Pough, Derrick D. Ruffin, Elijah J. Sims, Nahmel C. Stratton, Nakeem B. Stratton, Dyjuan S. Tatro, Kanan D. Tatro, and Charles M. Thompson. The sentencings for these individuals are scheduled from March through May of 2011. In the course of the investigation of the OGK gang, 25 firearms and various quantities of controlled substances were seized by law enforcement.

The prosecutions of both organizations resulted from an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force and Safe Streets Task Force investigation conducted by the Office of the United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York; the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Albany Field Division; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives; the Drug Enforcement Administration, Albany District Office; the City of Albany Police Department; the Albany County Sheriff's Department; the New York State Police; the New York State Department of Corrections; the New York State Division of Parole; and the Rensselaer County Sheriff's Department, with the assistance of the United States Marshal's Service, Northern District of New York, Albany Office; U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, Department of Homeland Security; the Albany County District Attorney's Office; and the Rensselaer County District Attorney's Office.

**Richard S. Hartunian**, United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York, said, “In the past five years we have taken important steps to address the violent crime problem in Albany. We have aggressively prosecuted violent offenders using federal laws and we have reached out to the youth in our community to show them a better way. We are proud of our efforts and will continue to work to showcase our Albany successes as shining examples of how partnerships between law enforcement and the community can lead to positive change.

**Clifford C. Holly**, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Albany Field Division, said, “The investigation of the members of the Original Gangsta Killers gang, as well as the previous investigation of the Jungle Junkies gang, reflect the collective efforts to deter gang activity in the Capital District. This resolve is apparent in the number of arrests made by law enforcement in these cases. The FBI, along with our law enforcement partners, will continue to actively identify individuals and groups throughout the Capital District involved in the most violent gang activity.”

**Chief Steven Krokoff**, Albany Police Department, stated “The results of these two investigations in 2006 and 2009 have had a positive impact on the entire community of Albany. Through joint investigations similar to this, we have been able to control and suppress violent crime in the City of Albany over the past five years. The city has seen a 24 percent decrease in violent crime since 2005. That is a direct result of the hard work of our officers, law enforcement partners as well as our community partners who have worked with us to steer our youth away from violence.”

**Ronald Turk**, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, New York Field Division, stated that “Today’s announcement of 25 guilty pleas from members of the Original Gangsta Killers is a testament to the

tenacious investigative and prosecutorial skills of the agents and prosecutors involved. Through their diligence they saw this investigation through from the initial stages of identifying the gang members, to gathering sufficient evidence, right through to the point that none of these gang members wanted to take their chances in a jury trial, hence 25 guilty pleas. All the law enforcement partners should be extremely proud of their efforts to help make the streets of Albany safer and ATF will continue to target armed violent criminals in our neighborhoods.”

**John P. Gilbride**, Special Agent in Charge of the New York Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration stated, “Members of the OGK have all pled out to their respective felony charges. Through federal, local and state law enforcement efforts this crack and marijuana drug trafficking organization has been dissolved in order to make Albany’s south side safer from the perils of drug trafficking and the violence associated. I would like to commend all the law enforcement agencies involved and I attribute the success of this investigation to the collaboration that existed throughout its course.

**Mayor Gerald D. Jennings**, City of Albany, said, “The coordinated efforts of the U.S. Attorney’s Office and all of the other law enforcement partners have made the streets of Albany a safer place for our citizens and I would like to thank everyone who participated. It is important to identify and arrest those individuals who want to continually engage in drug trafficking and violence in all of our communities. These two investigations succeeded in doing that. We must also continue to educate and work with our young people and provide them with alternatives to gangs and violence.”

**Albany County Sheriff James L. Cambell** stated “ The investigation, arrests, and subsequent pleas of all participants in this case are a perfect example of excellent

police work involving Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies working together.”

**Brian Fischer**, New York State Department of Correctional Services

Commissioner stated: "Unfortunately, some offenders continue their criminal activities even while incarcerated. The vigilance of our staff and that of our fellow law enforcement agencies helps bring those offenders to justice, and these guilty pleas are the latest example. I would like to thank our staff and our partners for their commitment to fighting criminal activity on both sides of prison walls."

**Andrea W. Evans**, Chief Executive Officer of the New York State Division of

Parole and chairwoman of the Board of Parole stated: "I believe in fighting fire with fire, and we are committed to working with our local and federal partners to 'gang up' on the gangs that spoil our communities and attempt to intimidate our neighbors. As this prosecution shows, we are not going to be intimidated and we are not going to back down from our commitment to public safety. The fact that every single defendant in this case pleaded guilty is a testament to the strength of the case that was carefully built by an extraordinary team of investigators and prosecutors."

**Brandon LaMora**, Supervisory Deputy U.S. Marshal, Albany, stated: "The U.S.

Marshal's Service is always willing to assist our sister agencies in any aspect of their investigations, including the apprehension of the defendants in this case. The coordinated efforts of all the various Federal, State, and Local agencies that participated in the successful investigation, arrest, and prosecution of all the defendants in this case is commendable and will prove to make the Albany area a safer place to live."

These prosecutions were part of a multi-prong approach to stem gang violence in the City of Albany. On November 8, 2010, United States Attorney Hartunian announced a new school initiative, the LEADership Project (Legal Education and Decision Making), which is providing all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in the Albany City School District with lessons about making good decisions, the effects of bad choices, and finding the path to rewarding career opportunities. A coalition of over 50 volunteers from 19 agencies and groups are working with teachers and students from every 5<sup>th</sup> grade class in the City School District of Albany by participating in four class sessions throughout the school year. The class lessons focus on making good decisions, the effects of bad choices, finding the right way, and achieving the good life by pursuing positive career goals. In the press release announcing the initiative, United States Attorney Hartunian pointed out that “[w]e in law enforcement recognize that aggressive enforcement actions directed at gangsters and violent criminals are only part of the solution to the problems plaguing the residents of Albany and other cities within the Northern District of New York. Equally important is our effort to reach out to our community leaders and schools to send the message that we will work with you to encourage our young people to make good decisions and lead productive lives.”

The United States Attorney’s Office is also partnering with the City School District of Albany in the establishment of a Youth Court program in Albany. On October 26, 2010 representatives of the United States Attorney’s Office made a presentation at a forum hosted by the New York State Bar Association's Special Committee on Youth Courts in support of the creation of a youth court in Albany, and the Office continues to work with the City School District to implement this important program.

This OGK case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Carlos A. Moreno and Daniel Hanlon. Further questions or inquiries may be directed to Deputy Criminal Chief William C. Pericak at (518) 431-0225.

\*\*\*\*\*

**END OF NEWS RELEASE**

\*\*\*\*\*