



*United States Attorney
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 30, 2008

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**LEADER OF PEEKSKILL DRUG ORGANIZATION WILL FACE LIFE IN
FEDERAL PRISON FOR MURDERS OF 2 MANHATTAN DRUG DEALERS**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that a jury in White Plains federal court concluded its deliberations today in the penalty phase of the murder trial of KHALID BARNES, a/k/a "Big Homie," a/k/a "Lid." The jury returned a unanimous verdict recommending a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of release. The other options available to the jury were to recommend a death sentence or to recommend a sentence other than death or life imprisonment, in which event the length of the sentence would have been decided by United States District Judge STEPHEN C. ROBINSON. The jury's unanimous verdict recommending life in prison, however, is binding on the Court when it sentences BARNES on October 17, 2008.

On May 13, 2008, after a six-week trial, the same jury convicted BARNES, 32, of the February 13, 2004, murders of drug dealers Demond Vaughan and Sergio Santana in Manhattan. The murders were charged under a federal statute governing deaths caused in the course of using or carrying a firearm in relation to a drug trafficking crime or crime of violence. The jury also convicted BARNES of one count of racketeering, one count of racketeering conspiracy, six counts of narcotics trafficking, one count of conspiracy to kidnap, one count of kidnapping, one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence, one count of possession of a silencer in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, and one count of possession of ammunition by a convicted felon. According to the evidence at trial:

BARNES was a leader of the Barnes Brothers Organization, a racketeering enterprise centered in Peekskill, New York, that, from 1995 through at least March 2004, was involved in the distribution of large quantities of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, and marijuana, as well as acts of violence including the two murders and a kidnapping. At its peak

in the fall of 2003, the Barnes Brothers Organization was distributing well over 100 grams of crack on a daily basis. This represented between \$8,000 and \$10,000 a day in revenue to the organization.

In November 2003, BARNES and three other members of the Organization tried unsuccessfully to steal drugs from their then-supplier by kidnapping one of the supplier's workers after a meeting in Yonkers, near the Bronx border. The kidnapping victim escaped by diving out of a moving car on Broadway in the Bronx.

Shortly thereafter, BARNES started working with new cocaine suppliers, Demond Vaughan and Sergio Santana. BARNES bought multiple kilograms of cocaine from them over a several-month period, and in February 2004, BARNES devised a plan to set up a drug deal with Vaughan and Santana, but then to kill them in order to steal cocaine and money from them.

Several days before the murders, BARNES arranged the drug deal and made inquiries about a firearm. On February 13, 2004, BARNES purchased a .22-caliber pistol and custom-made silencer from a Peekskill acquaintance, drove by himself to Vaughan's apartment on 145th Street in Manhattan, entered the apartment, and thereafter shot Vaughan and Santana in the head multiple times while they counted money. Both Vaughan and Santana were found dead with some of the money still clutched in their hands.

In March 2004, when BARNES and several of his co-conspirators were arrested, agents seized hundreds of grams of crack and powder cocaine from stash houses used by members of the racketeering organization, as well as numerous firearms and ammunition.

In addition to being convicted of the crimes listed above, Barnes was acquitted of three attempted murder counts, two counts of conspiracy to murder, and one count of possessing of a firearm and ammunition while a convicted felon.

KHALID BARNES' conviction is the result of a lengthy wiretap investigation by and close coordination among the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), the Peekskill Police Department, and the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

Including KHALID BARNES, ten members of the Barnes Brothers Organization have been convicted to date. Seven have been sentenced, and their prison terms range from four to thirteen years. Two additional members, DAWUD BARNES and TUERE

BARNES, are currently awaiting trial, and one other defendant, ANTHONY PAULINO, is a fugitive. As to DAWUD BARNES, TUERE BARNES and PAULINO, the charges in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty

Mr. GARCIA thanked the DEA and the Peekskill Police for their tireless efforts in dismantling the Barnes Brothers Organization.

Assistant United States Attorneys DAVID V. HARBACH, II and ANDREW S. DEMBER are in charge of the prosecution.

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