

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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ROCHESTER MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG CHARGES

ROCHESTER, N.Y. - U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Keith "Kiki" Ruther, 34, of Rochester, N.Y., pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute cocaine before U.S. District Judge Charles J. Siragusa. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of \$1,000,000, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas E. Gregory, who is handling the case, stated that Ruther sold cocaine and supplied cocaine to several associates of a street crew that controlled the drug trade in the area of Mark Street and Hudson Avenue in the city of Rochester for several years. Ruther also possessed a firearm in connection with the drug trafficking offense.

Much of the street level drug activity occurred in plain view on the sidewalk in front of the Hello Hudson Mini Mart at 519 Hudson Avenue, as well as surrounding street corners and parking lots. The group also utilized rental apartments and abandoned houses from which they stored and sold cocaine and crack cocaine on a daily basis. Law enforcement responded to repeated citizen calls for service to combat open the air drug sales and shootings in the general area of Mark and Hudson Streets.

"This case should serve as a warning to any individual or group of individuals who would consider operating an open air drug market," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "This Office will continue to pursue those who sell and distribute narcotics on the corners of our streets with homes, stores and families, including children, nearby. As in this case, you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

The defendant was arrested along with 10 others in January 2012. To date, five defendants have been convicted.

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, under the direction of Resident Agent in Charge Scott Heagney and the Rochester Police Department, under the direction of Chief James Sheppard.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 20, 2013 before Judge Siragusa.

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