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Eastern District of Pennsylvania

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September 9, 2010

FORMER POLICE OFFICERS FACE ADDITIONAL CHARGES

PHILADELPHIA - A superseding indictment¹ was unsealed today against former Philadelphia Police Officers Robert Snyder, James Venziale and Mark Williams, along with Snyder's wife Christal, Angel Ortiz, Zachary Young and Miguel Santiago, charging an additional count stemming from a drug conspiracy case, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. Specifically, all of the defendants are charged with possession with the intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin within 1,000 feet of a school.

Additionally, the superseding indictment also charges Ortiz, both Snyders, Williams, and another individual named Marcus Branker with conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery, attempted Hobbs Act robbery, and using and carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

According to the superseding indictment, the defendants attempted to rob someone they believed was a member of the "mafia", but who in reality was a undercover FBI agent. Ortiz believed that the "Mafia" member routinely collected large amounts of gambling proceeds from individuals in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and then delivered those proceeds to be laundered by, who they believed was a drug dealer and money launderer, but who in reality, was an undercover Special Agent with the DEA. The indictment details how a scheme was developed whereby defendant Williams and Robert Snyder, abused their positions as Philadelphia Police officers, by planning to have defendant Williams conduct a vehicle stop while defendant Ortiz was in possession of the United States Currency and a small amount of narcotics. After finding the narcotics and United States Currency, Williams would make it appear as if he was arresting Ortiz and seizing the money and drugs. To ensure that the "mafia" member believed that the seizure was legitimate Police activity, defendant Williams provided Ortiz with a Philadelphia Police Department property receipt.

On June 25, 2010 Williams was placed on restricted duty by the Philadelphia Police Department. As a result, he was not permitted to wear a police uniform, not permitted to carry a weapon on or off duty and was not permitted to take any police action. Additionally, Williams was required to, and did turn in his Police Department issued weapon. Despite these restrictions,

¹An Indictment or Information is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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an attempt to commit the robbery took place on July 9, 2010. Williams, recruited defendant Branker, who drove a vehicle equipped with strobe lights, to pretend to be an undercover police officer to assist in the vehicle stop. Williams then, while off duty, and on restricted duty, armed himself with his personal weapon, and took, without authorization, a Philadelphia Police Department vehicle from the 39th Police district. After meeting with Ortiz and discussing the final arrangement, Williams and Branker took their positions to await the arrival of the “mafia” member.

According to the indictment, defendant Christal Snyder facilitated the conspiracy, by passing information, frequently via telephone or text message, between the defendants Robert Snyder, Mark Williams and Angel Ortiz.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE OR YEAR OF BIRTH
Marcus Branker	Philadelphia, PA	1972

If convicted of all charges, the defendants now face the following maximum possible sentences:

Young: maximum sentence of 184 years in prison with a mandatory minimum term of ten years;

Ortiz: maximum sentence of 337 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of ten years;

Robert Snyder: maximum sentence of 169 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of ten years;

Christal Snyder: maximum sentence of 185 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of ten years;

Williams: maximum sentence of 209 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of ten years;

Branker: maximum sentence of 45 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of five years.

The case was investigated by The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, with the cooperation and assistance of the Philadelphia Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kathy A. Stark and Maureen McCartney.

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