

Remarks of the United States Attorney
Press conference September 28, 2012

Good afternoon. I am Bill Killian, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee. I am joined here today by District Attorney General Bill Cox, his Assistant DA Neal Pinkston, Chattanooga Police Chief Bobby Dodd, Marion County Sheriff Bo Burnette, Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives Resident Agent-in-Charge Darrell Hill, Supervisory Assistant United States Attorney Scott Winne, Assistant United States Attorney Chris Poole, who is also the Anti-Gang Coordinator and Project Safe Neighborhood Coordinator for our office, and Boyd Patterson, Chattanooga Gang Task Force Coordinator.

We are here today to announce the arrests, upon federal and state indictments, of several prominent gang members. These indictments are the result of a joint local, federal and state effort, in conjunction with the overall gang task force initiative that was begun in Chattanooga several months ago. These arrests and prosecutions are the first to occur as a result of this joint initiative. They will not be the last.

Chattanooga gang activity is a serious problem. Gang members commit violent felonies, involving weapons, drugs, shootings, and other illegal activity. The focus of the gang task force initiative has been and will continue to be on the individuals involved in this illegal activity. The safety and security of this area is not only a concern of the United States Department of Justice, but also of the Chattanooga Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff's Department, 11th Judicial District Attorney General's office, the Chattanooga Gang Task Force and federal Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives.

25 Chattanooga residents and 4 Marion County residents have been indicted. Of those, at least 16 are validated or suspected gang members. They come from gangs like the Bloods, Crips, Gangster Disciples and the Aryan Nation. Four others are accused of being drug suppliers whose customers are gang members. They all face harsh penalties. Some face a life sentence in federal prison, and as you know, in the federal system there is no parole. We have indicted one defendant's house which we will seek to forfeit, a house he owned and from which he sold crack cocaine.

The Chattanooga Police Department arrested 20-30 defendants on state charges this week, and executed 4 search warrants on local businesses that resulted in the recovery of synthetic marijuana and approximately \$10,000 in cash that will be forfeited in state court.

Four Chattanooga defendants and one Marion County defendant remain at large: ALFRED FORD, QUINLIN NEWBY, CORTNEY NELSON, and BRANDON MORRIS of Chattanooga and PAMELA WALTERS of Marion County.

We ask the public to call the Chattanooga Police Department, Marion County Sheriff's Office, United States Marshals Service or ATF if they have any information on the location of these defendants.

The United States Marshals Service has provided invaluable assistance by safely and securely bringing many of these defendants into custody. They often work behind the scenes but they are an important law enforcement partner.

We also continue to ask for the public's cooperation and assistance in our ongoing efforts to successfully and effectively address the problem of gang violence in Chattanooga, Marion County and all of East Tennessee. People in our area are entitled, as are all Americans, to a safe place to live and work. Prosecuting acts of violence committed by and on behalf of gangs will continue to be a priority of the Department of Justice and the gang task force. We are continuing our local, federal and state partnerships to address this problem. The coordination of efforts by law enforcement has directly contributed to the arrests and indictments we announce today. We will continue our efforts.

The public is cautioned that indictments are merely charges, and a determination of guilt or innocence, at this point, has not been made.

We are limited, at this stage of the prosecution, by the comments which can be made. However within those parameters, I'll be glad to address questions, should you have them.