

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Law Enforcement Officials Announce the Guilty Plea of a Major Camden Cocaine Supplier who Admitted to Contracting Out Six Murders

*– Officials also Detailed the Drug Leader's Cooperation
with Law Enforcement over the last Four Years –*

(More)

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CAMDEN – U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie and DEA Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, along with Acting Camden County Prosecutor Joshua M. Ottenberg, announced today that former Camden drug leader Raymond Morales pleaded guilty in July 2005, admitting that he contracted out six murders and the attempted murder of a witness, and has been cooperating with federal law enforcement authorities since before his guilty plea.

Law enforcement officials acknowledged for the first time that Morales, 35, of Camden, pleaded guilty on July 27, 2005, to a nine-count Superseding Information. The Superseding Information, which was unsealed on May 9, 2007, charges Morales with six counts of ordering a murder in the furtherance of a Continuing Criminal Enterprise (“CCE”); one count of witness tampering by ordering the attempted murder of a witness; one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute over 500 grams of cocaine; and one count of being a principal administrator of a CCE that operated in Camden from 1993 until 2003.

As a result of his plea, Morales faces a maximum penalty of seven life sentences and seven 20-year mandatory minimum sentences (one for the CCE and each of the six murders); the drug count carries a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison with a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years in prison; and a 20-year maximum prison term on the witness tampering charge.

To date, 23 defendants directly connected to Morales’ CCE have been charged federally in separate Indictments, 11 of these defendants have pleaded guilty, as a result of a 4-year investigation that was assisted with the cooperation of Morales. Additionally, 35 suspects were arrested on state charges over the course of the overlapping investigations. (The federal defendants are broken down by names, ages and towns of residence, along with charges and penalties, by charging document in an addendum to this news release.)

A CCE charge is the illegal drug trafficking equivalent to the RICO statute and represents the most powerful federal drug charge that is intended to punish drug-lords and violent drug organizations, and carries a maximum prison sentence of life for the principal administrators of the CCE.

Morales was one of the leaders and principal administrators of a long-term, large-scale drug trafficking CCE that operated in Camden for over 10 years. In addition to running its own crack cocaine distribution street set, the Morales organization distributed hundreds of kilograms of cocaine to several major buyers, each of whom was the leader of his own drug trafficking organization or worked for such an organization. Morales strengthened the affiliated drug trafficking organizations to whom he distributed cocaine by providing high quality cocaine in substantial quantities at relatively low prices, thereby

ensuring the continued vitality of those affiliated drug trafficking organizations.

At his plea hearing, Morales admitted hiring others to kill six individuals and an attempt to kill a witness, all of which were in the furtherance of his CCE. Morales admitted his involvement in the following murders, which occurred in Camden and Philadelphia;

- James Fatarre Dixon was murdered on Dec. 12, 1993, in Camden. Two defendants were arrested on murder charges by the Camden County Prosecutor's Office. A third individual believed to have been involved in the murder was, in fact, murdered before he could be charged with the Dixon murder. One defendant pleaded guilty to aggravated manslaughter and another pleaded guilty to conspiracy.
- Derrick Samuels was murdered on Aug. 28, 1994, in Camden. The investigation is continuing.
- Miguel Batista was murdered on Sept. 26, 1996, in Camden. Juan Rivera-Velez, 32, a.k.a. "Junito," and "Two-Face," was federally indicted for the murder as well as the attempted murder of a witness. Rivera-Velez's case is pending trial.
- Odalis Morel was murdered on Nov. 18, 1996, in Philadelphia. Wilfredo Gomez was convicted with the murder by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.
- Pedro Cruz was murdered on April 24, 2001. Karah Moore is charged federally with killing Cruz in furtherance of Morales' CCE. Moore's case is pending trial.
- Kenneth Fussell was murdered on Oct. 4, 2001, in Camden. Jevon Lewis, 31, of Camden, a.k.a. "V," "Cool V" and "Von," and Ahmed Judge, 29, of Camden, a.k.a. "Edy" and "Bleek," were indicted on Feb. 1, 2006, by a federal grand jury for killing of Kenneth Fussell in furtherance of Morales' CCE. Subsequently, the grand jury returned a Superseding Indictment on April 25, 2007. The case against Lewis and Judge is pending trial, which is scheduled for Nov. 5, 2007.
- An attempt was made on the life of another individual on April 5, 2003, who had been a witness in the Miguel Batista homicide. As stated above, Juan Rivera-Velez is federally charged with witness tampering for the attempted murder.

Morales admitted that he distributed kilograms of cocaine directly to the leaders of other drug trafficking organizations. Those leaders, according to the Indictment, included Jevon Lewis, Mack Jones, 34, a.k.a. "Bear," Mark Davis, 28, of Camden, a.k.a. "Dos" and "Andos," and Ronald Damon, 38, a.k.a. "Rockmeyer." Through the course of the

investigation, each of these leaders and certain members of the organizations have been arrested and federally charged.

One of those leaders, Jevon Lewis headed a long-term, large-scale drug trafficking organization which operated in and around the city of Camden. According to the Indictment, from early 2001 until September 2002, Morales supplied the Jevon Lewis organization with over 50 kilograms of cocaine.

Another leader identified as Mack Jones, headed a long-term, large-scale drug trafficking organization in Camden. Beginning in early 2001 and continuing to the middle of 2003, the Mack Jones organization purchased over 50 kilograms of cocaine from Morales.

Ronald Damon, 37, of Camden, a.k.a. "Rockmeyer," was the leader of a high profile narcotic trafficking network known as the "300 Morse Street Crew," who Morales also supplied with kilogram quantities of cocaine. This organization allegedly controlled the powder and crack cocaine markets in Camden's Eastside section.

Morales also supplied an organization run by Mark Davis, who was identified as the leader of the Ablett Village drug trafficking organization. Davis and his organization possessed multiple firearms, including an AK-47 assault rifle.

The investigation into the Morales organization also resulted in the arrests and guilty pleas of some of Morales' cocaine suppliers. Alvaro Ramos-Gonzalez, 41, and Carlos Alberto Ramos-Gonzalez, 53, both Mexican nationals who illegally entered the United States and resided in Tucson, Ariz., pleaded guilty for their roles in the conspiracy to distribute more than 300 kilograms of cocaine. At their plea hearings both admitted their involvement in a conspiracy in which numerous trips were made to bring large quantities of cocaine were driven across the country from Tucson to the Philadelphia/Camden area to supply Morales.

In early May, 2007, five additional members of major Camden cocaine distribution organizations were arrested on two separate Indictments, which were returned on April 25, 2007. The first Indictment charges Karah Moore, 32, of Camden, with murdering Pedro Cruz in furtherance of Morales' CCE. Allegedly, Moore, a.k.a. "Rabeen" and "Rah Rah," was hired by Morales to kill Cruz. After Cruz was fatally shot on April 24, 2001, Morales paid Moore with \$10,000 worth of cocaine for committing the murder.

In the second Indictment, Ismael Zayas, 37, of Camden, is charged with working for Morales as a middleman. According to the Indictment, Morales did not deal directly with drug leaders whom he did not trust or he considered dangerous. According to the Indictment, Zayas acted as a middleman and sold cocaine to the self-styled "MOB Boys," which was run by several partners. The MOB Boys operated an open air drug market in

the middle of the 1200 block of Morton Street in Camden. According to the Indictment, from the middle of 2001 to early 2003, the MOB Boys purchased over 50 kilograms of cocaine from Zayas. Also charged in the Indictment are Andres Morales, 34, a.k.a. "Andy," of Camden, who worked for Raymond Morales, Stephen Lindsey, 36, a.k.a. "Crush," of Camden, Joseph Rosario, 33, a.k.a. "Farfito" and "Joey Crack," of Camden, and Melvin Brown, 31, a.k.a. "Rice," of Camden, all three worked for the Mack Jones organization. Zayas remains a fugitive.

In January 2005, federal, state, county and local officials announced a cooperative effort among the U.S. Attorney's Office, DEA, ATF, FBI and U.S. Marshal's Service to assist local, county and state law enforcement in their mission to combat crime in the City of Camden. The investigations that resulted in the Indictments were led by the DEA and the Camden County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Unit, which were assisted by the Philadelphia/Camden High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force.

"Nearly two and a half years ago, we set out on a mission to bring greater resources to the fight against drugs and lawlessness in the City of Camden," Christie said. "We made it clear then that we wanted to help Camden move out of the national spotlight as a crime capital and ahead with its future. Today we are announcing how this successfully investigation came together through the fruits of our combined efforts to improve Camden."

Gerard P. McAleer, DEA New Jersey Division, Special Agent in Charge, stated, "This is another example of how violence and murder are significant components of a drug trafficking enterprise. This is a direct message to criminals that want to continue their illegal drug trade, we will continue to utilize all of our law enforcement resources to eliminate drug fueled violence.

"These indictments and arrests clearly demonstrate once again the significant impact law enforcement agencies can make when we work together to battle illegal narcotics trafficking and the violence often associated with it," Acting Camden County Prosecutor Joshua M. Ottenberg said. "I am extremely proud of the members of my office and the other agencies for their efforts, which culminated in the indictments we are announcing today. Our ultimate objective is nothing less than enhancing the quality of life for residents in Camden and surrounding communities."

Despite Indictment or being charged in a criminal complaint, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

Christie credited the Special Agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in

Charge Gerard P. McAleer, in Newark, and Investigators with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office Homicide Unit, along with member agencies of the Philadelphia/Camden HIDTA Task Force, under the direction of Acting Camden County Prosecutor Joshua M. Ottenberg and ATF Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Mark Potter, with developing the investigation which resulted in the Indictments and Superseding Indictment.

The Philadelphia/Camden HIDTA Task Force comprises the U.S. Attorneys' Offices for the Districts of New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania, The Camden County Prosecutor's Office, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, DEA, FBI, ATF, Camden Police Department, New Jersey State Police, Philadelphia Police Department, New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, Camden County Sheriff's Department, Delaware River Port Authority Police and the U.S. Marshal's Service.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Diana V. Carrig, Howard Wiener and Jason Richardson of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Camden.

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ADDENDUM

Raymond Morales

Raymond Morales, 35, of Camden, pleaded guilty on July 27, 2005, to a nine-count Superseding Information. The Superseding Information, which was unsealed on May 9, 2007, charges Morales with six counts of ordering a murder in the furtherance of a Continuing Criminal Enterprise ("CCE"); one count of witness tampering by ordering the attempted murder of a witness; one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute over 500 grams of cocaine; and one count of being a principal administrator of a CCE that operated in Camden from 1993 until 2003. Morales is pending sentencing.

Jevon Lewis et al. Superseding Indictment

Jevon Lewis, 32, of Camden, pending trial on a Superseding Indictment returned on April 25, 2007, which charges one count of conspiracy with Raymond Morales and others to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine, and 50 grams or more of crack cocaine; one count of murder in furtherance of Continuing Criminal Enterprise; and murder in the course of a firearms offense.

Ahmed Judge, 30, of Camden, pending trial on a Superseding Indictment returned on April 25, 2007, on the same charges as Lewis above, plus possession of firearm by previously convicted felon.

Dennis Rodriguez, 30, of Camden, Mack Jones, 34, of Camden, Francisco Morales, 33, of Camden, and Ruben Lozado, 35, of Camden, are all pending trial on one count of conspiracy with Raymond Morales and others to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine, and 50 grams or more of crack cocaine.

Arizona Connection

Carlos Alberto Ramos-Gonzalez, 53, a Mexican national who resided in Tucson, AZ, was the head of an Arizona cocaine trafficking organization. Ramos-Gonzalez pleaded guilty to a two-count Superseding Information for his role in a conspiracy to distribute approximately 300 kilograms of cocaine and for illegally reentering the United States after having been previously deported. Ramos-Gonzalez was sentenced to 292 months in federal prison.

Alvaro Ramos-Gonzalez, 41, a Mexican national who resided in Tucson, AZ, is Carlos' brother and partner. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 210 months imprisonment.

Alma Ramos-Gonzalez, 43, a Mexican national who resided in Tucson, AZ, sister of Carlos and Alvaro, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 41 months in prison.

Peter Michael Mellor, 47, of Tucson, AZ, who assisted in transporting kilograms of cocaine and hundreds of thousands of dollars between Arizona and New Jersey, has pleaded guilty and is pending sentencing.

Jose Francisco Gonzalez-Villa, 47, of Tucson, AZ, had a similar role as Mellor, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 87 months imprisonment.

Jesus Layva, 28, of Tucson, AZ, and Laura Rodriguez, 28, of Tucson, AZ, have plead guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

Edgar Gonzalez-Valenzuela 27, is pending trial.

The Ablett Village Organization

Mark Davis, 29, of Camden, and his right-hand man, James Baker, 33, of Camden, a.k.a. "Big Man," controlled the illegal drug trade in the area of Ablett Village, a public housing

community in Camden's Cramer Hill section. Davis pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 174 months in federal prison. Baker pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 70 months in federal prison.

Ismael Zayas, et al.

Ismael Zayas, 37, of Camden, and four additional defendants were indicted on April 25, 2007. Zayas remains a fugitive. Zayas, along with Andres Morales, 34, of Camden, Stephen Lindsey, 36, of Camden, Joseph Rosario, 33, of Oaklyn, Melvin Brown, 31, of Camden, are pending trial on one count of conspiring with one another and Raymond Morales, Francisco Morales, Mack Jones, and Jevon Lewis, and with others to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and 50 grams or more of crack cocaine and one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine.

Karah Moore Indictment

Karah Moore, 32, of Camden, was indicted on May 8, 2006, in a three-count Indictment charging him with participating in a drug trafficking conspiracy with Raymond Morales and others; the April 24, 2001, murder of Pedro Cruz by the use of a firearm in furtherance of the drug trafficking conspiracy; and murder of Pedro Cruz in furtherance of the Morales' continuing criminal enterprise. Moore is pending trial.

Ronald Damon and the "300 Morse Street Crew"

Ronald Damon, 38, of Camden, a.k.a. "Rockmyer," was the leader of the narcotic trafficking network known as the "300 Morse Street Crew." Damon pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 144 month in federal prison.

Juan Rivera-Velez Superseding Indictment

Juan Rivera-Velez, 32, of Camden, was charged in a four count Superseding Indictment with participating in a drug trafficking conspiracy with Raymond Morales and others; killing Miguel Batista, a/k/a "Ito," on September 26, 1996, in furtherance of the drug trafficking conspiracy by using a firearm; witness tampering, by attempting to kill Rafael Colon-Rodriguez on April 5, 2003; and use of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. Allegedly, Rivera-Velez was hired by Morales as an enforcer/bodyguard and

paid a weekly salary. Rivera-Velez is pending trial.

Defendants Charged by Local Authorities in Connection with Murders

David Chavez, 33, of Camden, was charged by Camden County Prosecutor's Office and pleaded guilty with the James Fatarre Dixon was murdered on Dec. 12, 1993, in Camden.

Eric Lee, 33, of Camden, was charged by Camden County Prosecutor's Office and pleaded guilty with the James Fatarre Dixon was murdered on Dec. 12, 1993, in Camden.

Pedro Rosario, 29, of Camden, was convicted with the Nov. 18, 1996, murder of Odalis Morel by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.