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THREE ARRESTED ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES

Two of the defendants who were indicted remain at large

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that three defendants involved in a drug conspiracy in the Monroe area have been arrested. **THEODORE McGOWAN a/k/a FAT, age 30, and MICHAEL WILLIAMS a/k/a SWAG, age 39, both of Tallulah, Louisiana, and DONALD BARNETT a/k/a JAY, age 37, of Newellton, Louisiana,** were each arrested last week on drug trafficking charges. Detention hearings for McGOWAN, WILLIAMS and BARNETT are scheduled for 2:00 p.m. today.

A 13-count indictment was returned in December charging five defendants with conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine, distribution of crack cocaine, and possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine.

This indictment is the result of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Operation code-named "Big Swag" and involved a cooperative effort of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. This investigation was conducted by the FBI North Louisiana Gang Task Force in Monroe into the activities of individuals involved in trafficking cocaine throughout northeast Louisiana.

OCDETF is the nation's primary tool for disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking

organizations. OCDETF leaders develop national and regional level drug trafficking targets, and coordinate the necessary law enforcement entities and resources to disrupt or dismantle the targeted criminal organization and seize their assets.

An indictment is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Defendants are entitled to a presumption of innocence under the law, and the government has the burden of proving every element of the charges beyond a reasonable doubt.

If convicted, each defendant faces 10 years to life in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

This case was investigated by the FBI North Louisiana Gang Task Force, which includes the FBI, West Monroe Police Department, and the Union, Morehouse, Madison, Tensas and Jackson Parish Sheriff's Offices, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sonia P. Cassidy.

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