

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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9 CHARGED IN NORTHEAST ROCHESTER NARCOTICS CONSPIRACY

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that a federal grand jury has returned an Indictment charging nine people with narcotics trafficking, including conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 280 grams or more of crack cocaine and five kilograms or more of cocaine, and possession of firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking.

Named in the Indictment are: Earnest Baker, 26, Keith Ruther, 33, Leandro Jones, 22, Matthew Latson, 23, Printice Latson, 34, Cedric Lewis, 18, Robert Baxter, 35, Eric Bradley, 20, and Jamar Nelson, 21, all of Rochester.

The drug charges carry a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life, a \$4,000,000 or both. The gun charges carry a mandatory minimum penalty of five years in prison which must be served consecutively to any other conviction and a \$250,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas E. Gregory, who is handling the case, stated that the defendants are all associates who work together to control the open air drug market at the corner of Hudson and Mark Street. The Indictment alleges that between January 2008 and January 2012, the group engaged in significant narcotics activity centered in and around Hudson Avenue, and Mark and Weeger Streets. Much of the street level drug activity has occurred in front of the Hello Hudson Mini Mart at 519 Hudson Avenue. The group also utilizes rental apartments and abandoned houses from which they sell on a daily basis. Law enforcement has made repeated calls for service to combat open air drug sales and shootings in the general area for several years. The most recent violent event occurred on December 28, 2011. Defendant Matthew Latson was shot by unknown assailants as he stood near the Hello Hudson Mini Mart.

"Let today's arrests stand as an example of the commitment of this Office to target gangs or any who would engage in organized criminal activity in our region," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "This should also serve as a warning to any individuals who may be considering similar behavior, we will continue to work closely with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners to track you down and bring you to justice." The investigation is ongoing and more arrests are expected.

The Indictment 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.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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