

Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JULY 7, 2011
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JURY CONVICTS GANG MEMBERS OF RACKETEERING CHARGES, INCLUDING MURDER OF 15 YEAR OLD GIRL

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that after a five week trial, a federal jury has convicted Michael Jackson, 21, Russell Hampton, 21, and Dearick Smith, 22, all of Rochester, N.Y., of violating federal racketeering laws, commonly referred as RICO.

The defendants were all convicted of conspiring to distribute narcotics, possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking, and violating the RICO statute. As part of the RICO convictions, the jury found that the defendants committed multiple overt acts, including the murder of a 15 year old using an AR-15 assault rifle, as well as three attempted murders of rival gang members. The jury also found each of the defendants responsible for distributing over 50 grams of cocaine base, and five kilograms of powder cocaine.

As a result of the convictions and the special verdict findings by the jury, each defendant faces up to life in prison for each charge.

In April of 2009, 28 gang members known as "Chain Gang" or "Wolfpack, were arrested and charged with engaging in racketeering activity. The gang operated in the Beechwood Section of the city. Specifically, gang members were charged with conspiring to use their membership in the Chain Gang to engage in a pattern of racketeering activity that included multiple acts of drug trafficking, murder and attempted murder. With today's verdicts, all 28 gang members have now been convicted.

"This prosecution sends a loud and clear message that our Office will use all of the tools at our disposal to prosecute those who commit violent crimes on the streets of our

community,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “In this case, our Office used the federal racketeering laws to successfully prosecute street gang members. Those who engage in organized and violent crime should know, we have used these and other federal statutes in the past and we will continue to do so in the future.”

The conviction is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, under the direction of Acting Resident Agent in Charge Christopher Robinson, the Rochester Police Department under the direction of Chief James Sheppard, and the U.S. Marshals Service, under the direction of Marshal Charles Salina. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Douglas Gregory and Bret Puscheck.

Michael Jackson will be sentenced on October 21, 2011, Russell Hampton on October 24, 2011 and Dearick Smith on October 25, 2011, all before Judge Siragusa.