



Department of Justice

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

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TWELVE INDICTED IN WESTERN N.C. DRUG CONSPIRACY

“Crack” Cocaine Distribution Conspiracy Alleged

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA – Seven Burke County residents were arrested today in a state, local, and federal law enforcement roundup. A two-count federal indictment charging 12 individuals with one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a quantity of cocaine base, commonly known as *crack* cocaine, was filed in U.S. District Court in Asheville on April 9, 2007. The indictment alleges that a crack cocaine conspiracy began around January 2002 and continued to the present, and was carried out in Burke County in Western North Carolina. The indictment contains one additional and separate count alleging that one of the members of the alleged conspiracy, having previously been convicted of a felony, possessed a firearm on October 29, 2006 in Burke County. The indictment is announced by Gretchen C.F. Shappert, United States Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. At the present time, seven of the 12 defendants have been arrested as part of a law enforcement roundup that took place early today. The defendants reside in the Burke County/Morganton area of Western NC. A list of the defendants and their current status is attached.

“Today we are announcing allegations regarding a drug distribution organization operating in the Western Piedmont area. According to allegations contained in this indictment, the organization is responsible for conspiring together to possess with intent to distribute 50 or more grams of cocaine base (“crack cocaine”). While many of our law enforcement resources have been busy attending to the illegal trafficking of methamphetamine within the Western District of North Carolina, we still remain vigilant to stamp out the continued trafficking of cocaine in our counties,” said U.S. Attorney Shappert, chief law enforcement officer over all Western N.C. counties. Joining Shappert in today’s announcement are Special Agent in Charge of FBI Operations for North Carolina, Nathan Gray; Delbert Richburg, Acting Resident Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Zebedee Graham, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF); David Call, Special Agent in Charge of the Hickory Office of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation; Burke County Sheriff John McDevitt; the Chief of the Morganton Department of Public Safety, Mark Tolbert, and officers and agents of the Catawba Valley Criminal Enterprise Task Force. The indictment is the result of a year-long, ongoing investigation.

The investigative operation, code named “Operation Ferris Wheel,” and led by the FBI, SBI and the Burke County Sheriff’s Office, has involved work in several Western North Carolina counties. The investigation was conducted under the federal Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program of the United States Department of Justice.

The OCDETF Program works to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug trafficking and money laundering organizations which supply illegal drugs inside or to the United States. The task force concept brings together the expertise and statutory authorities of seven federal law enforcement agencies – including components of the Departments of Justice, Treasury and Homeland Security – working together with state and

local partners, under the leadership of the United States Attorneys' Offices. During fiscal year 2005, OCDETF investigations resulted in 9,898 defendants charged and 7,856 convictions nationwide. In the same time period, OCDETF investigations resulted in seizures totaling \$330 million.

If convicted, each of the defendants faces a maximum statutory penalty of from ten years to life imprisonment and a \$4 million fine on the drug conspiracy count (Count One) alone. If convicted, the defendants' individual sentences will be determined by the Court after review of factors unique to his or her case, including each defendant's prior criminal record, if any, each defendant's role in the offense, and the characteristics of the violation. As to all defendants, no sentence will exceed the statutory maximum, and in most cases it will be less than the maximum.

The charges contained in the indictment are only allegations. In the American justice system, a person is presumed innocent unless and until he or she is proven guilty in a court of law.

The prosecution is being handled for the government by Assistant United States Attorney Jill Westmoreland Rose.

DEFENDANT LIST:

United States v. Wesley Tyrone Booker, et al
Docket No. 1:07CR33

WESLEY TYRONE BOOKER
AGE 44
MORGANTON, NC
In local custody

DWAYNE BULLOCK
AGE 25
MORGANTON, NC
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

JENNIE LARGENT COSBY
AGE 48
MORGANTON, NC
In State custody

TICO LOMBARD FLEMING
AGE 36
MORGANTON, NC
Not yet arrested

CHARLISA TERELLE KINCAID
AGE 37
MORGANTON, NC
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

CURTIS JEROME LYTLE
Also known as "Curtis Blow" and Pimp"
AGE 38
MORGANTON, NC
Not yet arrested

MATTHEW DAVID PARDUE
AGE 23
MORGANTON, NC
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

TERRELL DEVON PATTERSON
AGE 21
MORGANTON, NC
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

HAROLD EUGENE PATTON
AGE 54
MORGANTON, NC
Not yet arrested

JOHN WILSON PATTON
AGE 62
MORGANTON, NC
ALSO CHARGED WITH ONE COUNT ALLEGING POSSESSION OF A FIREARM BY A CONVICTED
FELON
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

OTIS RORIE, JR.
AGE 41
MORGANTON, NC
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

TERRANCE BRADLEY THOMPSON
AGE 27
MORGANTON, NC
In Federal Custody as of 4/25/07

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