



Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Arkansas
CODY HILAND, UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

<http://www.justice.gov/edar>

425 West Capitol Avenue, Suite 500
Post Office Box 1229
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1229

(501) 340-2600

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CONTACT: Chris Givens
Public Information Officer

**MULTISTATE DRUG ORGANIZATION DISMANTLED;
31 DEFENDANTS FACE FEDERAL DRUG AND FIREARMS CHARGES**

LITTLE ROCK—In arrest operations that stretched across the country for the past week, law enforcement officers have arrested multiple defendants in an effort to disrupt a transnational drug-trafficking organization responsible for distributing hundreds of pounds of methamphetamine in central Arkansas.

Cody Hiland, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Justin C. King, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Little Rock Field Office, announced the arrests and the unsealing of a federal indictment charging 31 defendants with 53 counts that include federal drug, firearm, and money laundering offenses. This afternoon, two defendants in California were arraigned on money laundering charges, bringing the total number of people arrested thus far to 23. In operations that began last Thursday, the DEA and its law enforcement partners have arrested four people in California and 19 in central Arkansas. Of the 19 local defendants served with arrest warrants, four were already in state custody and two in federal custody. Eight defendants remain fugitives, four in Arkansas and four in California.

This drug-trafficking organization is alleged to be led by Eric Baldwin, 29, and Nicholas Robinson, Jr., 23, both of Little Rock. The indictment named 23 defendants from the central Arkansas area—where the drugs were distributed—and eight defendants from southern California, which is alleged to be the source of the drugs.

“This criminal organization stretched from Arkansas to California, and was responsible for distributing large quantities of illegal drugs here in our neighborhoods,” U.S. Attorney Hiland said. “This indictment demonstrates that our federal reach does not stop at the Arkansas border. If you sell illegal drugs in Arkansas, we will prosecute you. If you send illegal drugs to Arkansas, we will prosecute you. Our goal continues to be to ensure criminals pay a consistent, painful cost for hurting our people and poisoning our communities.”

This ongoing investigation was the result of several law enforcement agencies, led by the DEA, attacking the drug-trafficking organization on multiple fronts. During the course of the investigation in 2017 and 2018, the DEA utilized three court-authorized wiretaps to intercept hundreds of drug-trafficking calls. Law enforcement officers, including DEA agents and local police departments, conducted more than a dozen controlled purchases of drugs, resulting in seizures of more than 1.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, as well as oxydocone and ecstasy pills.

In addition, the DEA worked closely with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service once agents discovered the organization's primary method for getting drugs into Arkansas—the U.S. mail. Agents intercepted more than 15 packages, which contained 13 kilograms of methamphetamine and four kilograms of marijuana. Additional operations, including the execution of search warrants and state arrests, led to the seizure of another 7.5 kilograms of methamphetamine, 8 kilograms of marijuana, 7 firearms, and more than \$25,000 in drug proceeds.

The DEA also conducted an extensive financial investigation which revealed what is alleged to be the organization's method of payment for the drugs—Wal-Mart to Wal-Mart wire transfers from Arkansas to California. During the investigation, it is alleged that individuals associated with this organization sent more than \$250,000 to California for the purchase of controlled substances.

“The wreckage caused by drugs affects everyone,” DEA ASAC King said. “No matter the amounts of drugs they sell, drug dealers breed crime in our neighborhoods and are a danger to our children. The arrests in this multi-jurisdictional investigation demonstrate to the citizens of central Arkansas and across the nation that federal, state, and local law enforcement can come together and accomplish great things. It should also serve as a warning to drug dealers here and beyond—regardless of your innovative tactics, we will arrest you and prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law.”

The investigation was conducted by the DEA, in conjunction with the United States Postal Inspection Service, and with assistance from multiple agencies, including: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, Arkansas State Police, Little Rock Police Department, Pulaski County Sheriff's Office, Benton Police Department, Saline County Sheriff's Office, Conway Police Department, Faulkner County Sheriff's Office, First Judicial District Drug Task Force, Central Drug Task Force, Arkansas Department of Community Corrections, and the Arkansas National Guard Counter Drug Task Force. The agencies assisting on arrest operations include: the FBI, U.S. Marshal Service, Office of Inspector General-Social Security Administration, North Little Rock Police Department, Jacksonville Police Department, and the Office of the Arkansas Attorney General.

The charges in today's unsealed indictment include conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, marijuana, and oxycodone; distribution and possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, marijuana, and oxycodone; possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime; felon in possession of a firearm; use of a phone to facilitate a drug-trafficking crime; and conspiracy to commit money laundering offenses.

The maximum penalty for the drug charges is not less than 10 years in prison and up to life imprisonment, and a \$10,000,000 fine. The maximum penalty for possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime is not less than five years in prison and up to life imprisonment, and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is 10 years in prison, and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for using a phone to facilitate a drug-trafficking crime is not more than four years in prison, and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum penalty for money laundering is not more than 20 years in prison, and a \$500,000 fine.

Trial is set for October 22, 2018, before Chief District Judge Brian S. Miller. The case, docketed as Case No. 4:18-cr-00466 BSM, is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Chris Givens. The defendants charged include:

Khambria Allen, 22, Little Rock, AR %
Eric Baldwin, 29, Little Rock, AR \$
John Bowman, 34, Bryant, AR
John Christopher Burch, 46, Conway, AR *
Justin Collins, 29, Augusta, AR
Kamie Collins, 31, Augusta, AR
Jason Flowers, 36, Little Rock, AR %
Windell Fountain, 50, Victorville, CA %
Jennifer Gosnell, 27, Conway, AR
Blake Gray, 36, Judsonia, AR
Deketric Harper, 23, Judsonia, AR %
Roderick Isom, 35, Little Rock, AR
Aundre Lamar Jones, 31, Los Angeles, CA ^
Patricia Janae Kennon, 30, Los Angeles, CA %
Chad Lane, 23, Mabelvale, AR *
Robert McIntosh, III, 35, Little Rock, AR
Lewis Miles, 47, Blytheville, AR \$
Aaron Lynn Parks, 35, Conway, AR *
Deaundry Peoples, 27, Little Rock, AR *
Ryan Rielly, 28, Benton, AR
Joseph Riggins, Jr., 27, Little Rock, AR
Nicholas D. Robinson, Jr., 23, Little Rock, AR %

Nicholas D. Robinson, Sr., 46, Little Rock, AR
Christopher Sanders, 39, Burbank, CA ^
Francis Andre Scott, 35, Los Angeles, CA %
Lemar Devon Steward, 23, Benton, AR
Autumn Talley, 30, Paramount, CA ^
April Treat, 30, Greenbrier, AR
Lorene Wilhite, 51, Los Angeles, CA ^
Ortez Williams, 25, Benton, AR
George Perry Wright, 35, North Hollywood, CA %

\$ already in federal custody

* already in state custody

^ arrested in California

% fugitive

An indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, is available on-line at

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