

NEWS RELEASE

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Trials, motions, and guilty pleas by DA's Drug Team, February 15-19

The DA's drug prosecution team held court in three courtrooms during the week of February 15 to February 19, 2010. The Honorable Chressie Thigpen, Superior Court Judge, presided over criminal courtroom 5150. The Honorable Jerry Cash Martin, Superior Court Judge, presided over criminal courtroom 5130. The Honorable John Craig, Superior Court Judge, presided over criminal court 5370.

TRIAL: Stanley Kelly, age 42, was tried before a jury for trafficking in cocaine. The jury found Kelly guilty of trafficking in cocaine. Judge Craig sentenced Kelly to 35-42 months in prison and imposed the mandatory \$50,000 fine.

TRIAL: Mario Edurado Ortiz-Zape, age 33, was tried before a jury for possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine. The jury found Ortiz-Zape guilty of the lesser-included offense of possession of cocaine and he was sentenced by Judge Martin to 6-8 months, suspended for a period of 30 months supervised probation. Ortiz-Zape entered notice of appeal.

Several other defendants pled guilty before their trials began and some pre-trial motions were argued; among them were:

The defense filed several pretrial motions in the matter of Elton Woodrow Hamilton, age 39, who was charged with possession of cocaine, 2) felony possession of marijuana, 3) possession of drug paraphernalia and 4) being a habitual felon. After arguments from both sides, Judge Martin granted Hamilton's motion to suppress the evidence and the case was dismissed.

The defense filed a pre-trial motion to suppress the evidence seized from Laverne Demery, age 53, who was charged with possession of cocaine. After arguments from both sides, Judge Thigpen granted Demery's motion to suppress the evidence and the case was dismissed.

The defense filed a pre-trial motion to suppress the evidence seized from Omar Jones, age 30, who was charged with possession of cocaine. After arguments from both sides, Judge Thigpen denied the defendant's motion to suppress. Jones pled guilty to possession of cocaine and Judge Thigpen sentenced Jones to 4-5 months, suspended for a period of 18 months supervised probation.

William Land, age 32, pled guilty to conspiracy to sell marijuana. Judge Craig sentenced Land to 4-5 months in prison.

Mafion McDonald, age 36, pled guilty to possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine and admitted his status as a habitual felon. Judge Craig sentenced McDonald to 72-96 months in prison.

Chad Boswell, age 27, pled guilty to 1) possession of cocaine, 2) possession of drug paraphernalia and 3) misdemeanor possession of marijuana. Judge Craig entered a 90-96 judgment against Boswell (*see* N.C.G.S. 90-96). Boswell was placed on supervised probation for 12 months.

Reginald Gordon, age 47, pled guilty to 1) sale of cocaine and 2) possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine. Judge Craig sentenced Gordon to 56-68 months in prison.

Alton Lilly, age 28, pled guilty to possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Judge Martin sentenced Lilly to 8-10 months, suspended for a period of 24 months supervised probation.

Don Latner, age 34, pled guilty to possession with intent to sell or deliver methamphetamine. Judge Thigpen sentenced Latner to 5-6 months, suspended for a period of 12 months probation.

James Robinson, age 40, pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Thigpen sentenced Robinson to 12-15 months, suspended for a period of 18 months probation.

John Jackson, age 24, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in opium and 2) sale of methadone. Judge Thigpen sentenced Jackson to 34-41 months in prison.

Michael Brown, age 52, pled guilty to 1) possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine and 2) possession of drug paraphernalia. Judge Thigpen sentenced Brown to 7-9 months, suspended for a period of 24 months probation.

Otha Lowe, age 37, pled guilty to felony possession of marijuana. Judge Thigpen sentenced Lowe to 5-6 months, suspended for a period of 18 months probation. As a condition of probation, Lowe will serve an active sentence of 45 days in jail.

Irisha Pruitt, age 27, pled guilty to felony possession of marijuana. Judge Craig sentenced Pruitt to 5-6 months, suspended for a period of 24 months probation.

Ricardo Ellis, age 33, pled guilty to felony possession of marijuana. Judge Craig sentenced Ellis to 6-8 months, suspended for a period of 36 months probation.

Latasha Anderson, age 35, pled guilty to felony possession of marijuana. Judge Craig entered a 90-96 judgment against Anderson (*see* N.C.G.S. 90-96). Anderson was placed on supervised probation for 12 months.

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