

NEWS RELEASE

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Methamphetamine, heroin traffickers sent to prison

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A drug trafficker who was found with approximately 16 pounds of methamphetamine and a heroin trafficker discovered with thousands of dollars in cash were among the 53 defendants recently convicted by the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team. The defendants entered their guilty pleas February 13-17, 2017, in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judge. The convictions were for crimes that included possessing, selling and trafficking in illegal drugs. Based on the structured sentencing laws in North Carolina, sentences ranged from probation to active prison sentences.

Among the defendants who were convicted and sent to prison were:

Santiago Arellano-Campos, 35, pled guilty to trafficking in methamphetamine by possession. Arellano-Campos was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison. In February 2016, Drug Enforcement Administration detectives had information that methamphetamine was being brought into Mecklenburg County from Arizona. Detectives conducted surveillance at a suspected delivery location, where they saw Arellano-Campos exit a taxi and approach an unoccupied car with Arizona tags in a parking lot. Detectives made contact with Arellano-Campos and had a K-9 circle the car. The K-9 gave a positive indication on the car, and Arellano-Campos allowed detectives to search the vehicle. Detectives located approximately 16 pounds of methamphetamine inside one of the doors. Arellano-Campos told detectives he made arrangements to pick up and sell the methamphetamine for \$12,500 per kilogram. He expected to earn \$8,000 from the deal.

Luis Garcia-Ruelas, 37, pled guilty to 1) trafficking in heroin by transportation and 2) attempted trafficking in heroin by possession. Garcia-Ruelas was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison. In April 2016, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police were conducting surveillance of individuals who were suspected of selling heroin. Detectives approached Garcia-Ruelas after they saw him exit his hotel room with luggage bags. Garcia-Ruelas gave detectives consent to search his apartment and his hotel room. Police located more than 200 grams of heroin and \$14,000 in cash.

Jose Padilla-Desiderio, 22, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. Padilla-Desiderio was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison. In May 2016, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police made contact with Padilla-Desiderio outside of his hotel room after obtaining information that he was selling heroin in the Charlotte area. Padilla-Desiderio then allowed them to search his hotel room. In the room, detectives discovered approximately 300 grams of heroin, as well as paraphernalia used in the packaging and sale of heroin. Padilla-Desiderio admitted to selling heroin.

Carolos Perez-Casillas, 25, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. Perez-Casillas was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison.

Jonathan Campos-Lopez, 20, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. Campos-Lopez was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Juan Sanchez-Villanueva, 40, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by transportation. Sanchez-Villanueva was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Tyler Flowe, 28, pled guilty to trafficking in marijuana by possession. Flowe was sentenced to 25-39 months in prison.

Vladimir Ziskind, 30, pled guilty to attempted trafficking in opiates by possession. Ziskind was sentenced to 23-37 months in prison.

Raphael Shannon, 20, pled guilty to 1) selling cocaine and 2) delivering marijuana. Shannon was sentenced to 10-21 months in prison.

Laniece Crumpler, 28, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in marijuana by possession and 2) attempted trafficking in marijuana by transportation. Crumpler was sentenced to 5-15 months in prison.

Note: Almost all guilty pleas entered in criminal administrative court are the result of an agreed upon plea arrangement between the State and the defendant, which is then approved by the sentencing judge. For more information about why most cases must be resolved by plea negotiation instead of jury trial, please visit the "Understanding Criminal Court" section of the DA's website at www.charmeckda.com.

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