

NEWS RELEASE

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Heroin, cocaine traffickers among 40 defendants convicted of drug crimes

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of February 22, 2016, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 40 defendants, including a heroin trafficker and a cocaine trafficker. The defendants entered their guilty pleas 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:

Jose Santiago-Camarillo, 29, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by transportation. Santiago-Camarillo was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison. In March 2014, members of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department received information that Santiago-Camarillo would be transporting a large amount of heroin. Officers conducted surveillance of the defendant and stopped his vehicle. While searching Santiago-Camarillo's vehicle, officers located more than 200 grams of heroin.

Oscar Montoya, 29, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by transportation. Montoya was sentenced to 35-51 months in prison.

James Austin, 30, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in heroin by possession, 2) possession of methamphetamine and 3) possession of heroin. Austin was sentenced to 18-31 months in prison.

Michael Cornwell, 20, pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Cornwell was sentenced to 12-24 months in prison.

Jerdarius McDonald, 24, pled guilty to possession of methamphetamine with the intent to sell or deliver. McDonald was sentenced to 4-15 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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