

NEWS RELEASE

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Drug traffickers among 56 defendants convicted

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Fifty-six defendants, including drug traffickers, pled guilty to drug offenses during the week of March 23, 2015. The defendants, who were prosecuted by the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team, entered their guilty pleas in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable Robert T. Sumner, Superior Court Judge. Based on the structured sentencing laws in North Carolina, sentences ranged from probation to active prison sentences.

Among the defendants who pled guilty and were sent to prison were:

Erick Hernandez-Cruz, 36, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by transportation. Hernandez-Cruz was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison. In October 2014, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police discovered more than 28 grams of heroin when they searched Hernandez-Cruz's vehicle during a traffic stop.

Jose Gonzales, 37, pled guilty to 1) trafficking in heroin by transportation and 2) sale of heroin. Gonzales was sentenced to 82-117 months in prison.

William Peoples, III, 25, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in heroin by possession, 2) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and 3) possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Peoples was sentenced to 38-74 months in prison.

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

Felix Carillo, 19, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in marijuana by transportation and 2) attempted trafficking in marijuana by possession. Carillo was sentenced to 18-40 months in prison.

Pamela Abell, 35, pled guilty to two counts of sale of heroin. Abell was sentenced to 13-25 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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