

NEWS RELEASE

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Defendants convicted of drug trafficking crimes; 21 others referred to treatment courts

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of March 25, 2019, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 38 defendants in courtroom 5310 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.

While the team works to hold drug sellers and traffickers accountable for their crimes, prosecutors also connect defendants facing addictions with treatment services. Since February 22, 2019, a total of 21 defendants have been referred to Mecklenburg County Recovery Courts, and 15 defendants have enrolled. Thirteen referrals were made to Superior STEP Recovery Court, four referrals were made to Wellness Court (formerly Mental Health Treatment Court) and four defendants were referred to DWI Recovery Court.

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

Jonathan Diaz, 23, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by possession. Judge Bell sentenced Diaz to 35-51 months in prison.

Tarrie Aiken, 30, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in opiates by sale and 2) attempted trafficking in opiates by possession. Judge Bell sentenced Aiken to 10-21 months in prison. Aiken was also sentenced to an additional 10-21 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. In July 2017, an undercover Cornelius police officer purchased 10 hydrocodone pills from Aiken.

Jalannie Hames, 23, pled guilty to sale of fentanyl. Judge Bell sentenced Hames to 10-21 months in prison. In June 2018, an undercover detective with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Vice and Narcotics Unit arranged to purchase \$4,500 worth of oxycodone pills from Hames. Hames sold 312 pills to the undercover detective. Analysis by the CMPD Crime Lab revealed that those pills were actually fentanyl, not oxycodone.

Timmario Williams, 27, pled guilty to attempted trafficking in cocaine by possession. Judge Bell sentenced Williams to 10-21 months in prison.

George Cottrell, 43, pled guilty to sale of cocaine. Judge Bell sentenced Cottrell to 9-20 months in prison.

Travis Johnson, 28, pled guilty to possession with the intent to sell or deliver fentanyl. Judge Bell sentenced Johnson to 6-17 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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