

NEWS RELEASE

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Drug traffickers among 31 defendants convicted of drug crimes

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of May 12, 2014, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 31 defendants in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable Jeffrey P. Hunt, 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 pled guilty and were sent to prison were:

Marco Antonio Espinoza, 22, pled guilty to trafficking in methamphetamine by transportation. He was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison. In September 2013, Espinoza transported hundreds of grams of methamphetamine from Georgia to sell in Charlotte. Officers stopped Espinoza's vehicle for motor vehicle violations and discovered the methamphetamine in the back seat.

Julio Rodriguez, 40, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. He was sentenced to a minimum of 90 months in prison.

Jose Ortega-Martinez, 44, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. He was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Mohammad Khan, 58, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by possession. He was sentenced to 23-37 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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