

NEWS RELEASE

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Heroin, methamphetamine traffickers sent to prison

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – During the week of June 5, 2017, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 38 defendants, including heroin and methamphetamine traffickers. The defendants entered their guilty pleas in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable Yvonne Mims Evans, 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 sent to prison were:

Jonathan Ortiz, 21, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by sale. Ortiz was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison. In September 2016, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police received information that Ortiz was looking to sell heroin. Undercover detectives made arrangements to purchase heroin from him. Ortiz then sold approximately 107 grams of heroin to detectives for \$1,000. Ortiz was arrested and admitted during an interview that he had sold about 10 grams of heroin daily for the past year.

Walter Irias, 43, pled guilty to trafficking in methamphetamine by transportation. Irias was sentenced to 80-108 months in prison. In October 2016, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police conducted a traffic stop on a car for speeding. A drug dog alerted police to the presence of drugs in the car, and officers located approximately 4.4 pounds of methamphetamine inside. Detectives interviewed Irias, who was in the car. He told detectives he was being paid to transport the methamphetamine from Georgia to Charlotte.

Delrico Simpson, 31, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by sale. Simpson was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Kara McGonigle, 33, pled guilty to conspiracy to traffic heroin by transportation. McGonigle was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Jeffrey McKnight, 33, pled guilty to attempted trafficking in heroin by possession. McKnight was sentenced to 26-44 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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