

NEWS RELEASE

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Heroin, methamphetamine traffickers sent to prison

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Over the course of a week, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team convicted 37 defendants, including heroin and methamphetamine traffickers. The defendants entered their guilty pleas August 15-19, 2016, in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable Carla N. Archie, Superior Court Judge. Based on the structured sentencing laws in North Carolina, sentences ranged from probation to active prison sentences.

Among the defendants sent to prison were:

Andres Vasquez, 21, pled guilty to 1) attempted trafficking in heroin by possession and 2) attempted trafficking in heroin by transportation. Vasquez was sentenced to a total of 46-80 months in prison. In October 2014, Pineville police stopped a car Vasquez was driving for suspected impaired driving. Officers noticed an odor of marijuana coming from the car, and Vasquez admitted that he previously smoked marijuana and consumed oxycodone. Police searched Vasquez's car and located a digital scale with black tar heroin residue, \$681 in cash, and 24.97 grams of black tar heroin.

Edwin Betancourt, 29, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by transportation. Betancourt was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison.

Thomas Hansford, 58, pled guilty to trafficking in methamphetamine by possession. Hansford was sentenced to 70-93 months in prison.

Jamie Hildreth, 39, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. Hildreth was sentenced to 44-65 months in prison.

Octaviano Mendoza, 52, pled guilty to conspiracy to traffic in marijuana by possession. Mendoza was sentenced to 25-39 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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