

NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney

March 14, 2018

Heroin trafficker sent to prison following jury's verdict

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team tried two defendants before juries February 26-March 9, 2018. The team convicted three others who entered guilty pleas before their cases were called for trial. The proceedings were held before The Honorable Jesse B. Caldwell, III and The Honorable Gregory R. Hayes, Superior Court Judges.

Patricia Palacios, 40, was tried for 1) trafficking in heroin by possession, 2) trafficking in heroin by transportation and 3) conspiracy to traffic in heroin. The jury found Palacios *guilty* as charged. Judge Caldwell sentenced Palacios to 76-104 months in prison.

Ramona Gales, 43, was tried for conspiracy to traffic in cocaine. The jury found Gales *not guilty*.

Cory Neal, 24, pled guilty to two counts of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Neal also admitted to violating his probation for a previous offense. Judge Hayes sentenced Neal to 12-24 months in prison.

Yadiel Del-Rio, 24, previously pled guilty to conspiracy to traffic in cocaine. Judge Hayes sentenced Del-Rio to 70-93 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 36 months of supervised probation. As one of the conditions of his probation, Del-Rio must serve 60 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Christian Welch, 35, pled guilty to attempted trafficking in heroin by possession. Judge Hayes sentenced Welch to 15-27 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As one of the conditions of his probation, Welch must serve 150 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, "like" the DA's Office on Facebook at www.facebook.com/charmeckda and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.

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