

NEWS RELEASE

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Drug traffickers among 31 defendants convicted by DA's Drug Team

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A heroin trafficker and a cocaine trafficker were among the 31 defendants recently convicted by the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team. The defendants entered their guilty pleas in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judge, during the week of June 13, 2016. 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:

Julian Lepe-Garcia, 36, pled guilty to trafficking in heroin by possession. Lepe-Garcia was sentenced to 90-120 months in prison.

Porfirio Gonzalez-Lopez, 36, pled guilty to trafficking in cocaine by possession. Gonzalez-Lopez was sentenced to 35-51 months in prison. Between August and October of 2015, Gonzalez-Lopez sold cocaine to undercover Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officers on several occasions. In October 2015, officers obtained a search warrant for Gonzalez-Lopez's home, and they located 66 grams of cocaine, scales, baggies and a gun in his bedroom.

Latrell Howard, 43, pled guilty to 1) selling methamphetamine and 2) possession of methamphetamine with the intent to sell or deliver. Howard was sentenced to 15-27 months in prison.

Gerico Alexander, 24, pled guilty to attempted trafficking in opiates by possession. Alexander was sentenced to 15-27 months in prison.

Andre McCants, 40, pled guilty to 1) selling cocaine and 2) delivery of cocaine. McCants was sentenced to 13-25 months in prison.

Channing Byers, 30, pled guilty to 1) selling cocaine and 2) possession with the intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Byers was sentenced to 13-25 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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