

NEWS RELEASE

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3 defendants tried for drug crimes; 4 others plead guilty

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Drug Team prosecuted seven defendants August 19-26, 2013, in Mecklenburg County Superior Court before The Honorable Linwood O. Foust and The Honorable James W. Morgan, Superior Court Judges. The team tried three defendants, and four others pled guilty when their cases were called for trial.

Roland Hughes, 36, was tried for 1) trafficking in marijuana by possession, 2) possession with intent to sell or deliver marijuana, 3) manufacture marijuana and 4) possession of drug paraphernalia. The jury returned verdicts of *guilty* on all counts. Judge Foust sentenced Hughes to 25-30 months in prison. Hughes was also sentenced to an additional 4-14 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending the successful completion of 18 months of supervised probation. On January 5, 2012, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police executed a search warrant at a house rented by Hughes. Inside, agents found evidence of a hydroponic marijuana grow operation. Police discovered 140 marijuana plants and 51 bags of cut marijuana for a total weight of 87 pounds of marijuana. Police also found grow lights and fertilizers.

Brandon Lindsey, 32, was tried for 1) possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine within 1,000 feet of a school. The jury returned a verdict of *guilty* for the lesser-included offense of possession of cocaine. Judge Morgan sentenced Lindsey to 8-10 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending the successful completion of 30 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Lindsey must serve 21 days in the Mecklenburg County jail.

James Mayfield, 27, was tried for 1) sale of cocaine, 2) delivery of cocaine and 3) possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Judge Morgan declared a mistrial when the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict.

The following defendants pled guilty when their cases were called for trial:

Belbin Valles, 41, pled guilty to 1) trafficking in cocaine, 2) sale of cocaine, 3) delivery of cocaine and 4) possession with intent to sell or deliver cocaine. Judge Morgan sentenced Valles to 35-42 months in prison.

Ricardo Viera, 20, pled guilty to 1) sale of heroin, 2) delivery of heroin and 3) possession with intent to sell or deliver heroin. Judge Foust sentenced Viera to 11-23 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending the successful completion of 18 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Viera must serve 39 days in the Mecklenburg County jail.

Erron Orr, 38, pled guilty to felony possession of marijuana. Judge Foust sentenced Orr to 18 months of supervised probation and ordered Orr to complete drug education classes as part of his probation.

Justin Gadsden pled guilty to possession of drug paraphernalia. Judge Foust sentenced him to 12 months of supervised probation.

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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