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U.S. Charges 26 Alleged Street Gang Members, Associates and Drug Suppliers in West Side Heroin Distribution Conspiracies

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The U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois issued the following news release:

During a seemingly routine traffic stop two weeks ago, police and federal agents covertly seized a drive shaft that was in the back of a black Jeep Cherokee driven by Erik Guevara and carrying his passenger, Rickey Ruiz. The authorities took the drive shaft to a Chicago police station where a drug dog positively alerted for the presence of narcotics. Police and agents opened the drive shaft and found approximately 7.7 kilograms -- almost 17 pounds -- of suspected heroin contained in plastic tubes. The seizure was no accident, however; it was part of an intensive investigation that the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Chicago Police Department began less than a year ago into the heroin-trafficking operations of the New Breeds street gang on the city's west side.

The investigation culminated yesterday when DEA agents and Chicago police arrested 20 defendants on federal or state charges, executed seven federal search warrants, and were seeking six additional alleged members and associates of the New Breeds and other streets gangs and individuals who supplied them with heroin. Altogether, 26 defendants, including alleged New Breeds faction leader Dana Bostic, were arrested or being sought on federal narcotics charges involving alleged conspiracies to peddle heroin on street corners or in buildings in a 12-square block area on the city's west side.

As of this morning, at least 20 of the 29 state and federal defendants were in custody, while officers and agents yesterday seized 13 guns, more than \$100,000 cash from Guevara that was hidden in a secret compartment in the floor of a basement, and a half-ounce of heroin, while making the arrests and executing search warrants at residences and a garage in Aurora, Chicago, Cicero, Forest Park and Hillside.

Previously during the investigation, law enforcement obtained approximately 345 grams of heroin from member's of Bostic's drug trafficking organization through seizures and controlled purchases, and seized five guns from members or associates of the network. And, on April 28, 2010, approximately \$249,820, allegedly belonging to Guevara's drug-trafficking organization and packaged in 23 floating bundles, was seized during a traffic stop from the gas tank of a Dodge Dakota driven by Elias Rubio.

"We are constantly maintaining pressure on street gang-controlled retail sales of narcotics, and particularly heroin in this case," said Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. "More than two dozen defendants, who didn't get the message previously, are now eligible, upon conviction, for lengthy prison terms. Cases like this

don't happen by accident. They result from dedicated, coordinated teamwork that exists among our partners -- in this case, the Chicago Police, the Cook County State's Attorney, and the DEA," Mr. Fitzgerald added.

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges together with John J. Riley, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the DEA; Jody P. Weis, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department; and Anita Alvarez, Cook County State's Attorney. The investigation was conducted under the umbrella of U.S. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF), and with assistance from the **High Intensity Drug Trafficking** Area Task Force (**HIDTA**). The investigation is continuing the officials said.

"The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Chicago Police Department will continue to collectively identify and investigate those allegedly responsible for subjecting our communities to the wrath of illegal drugs and gang violence, as well as the repercussions inherently associated with drug and gang activity," Mr. Riley said. "The mutually beneficial relationship will continue to result in investigations that not only rid our communities of drug dealers, but will also snare those who supply neighborhood drug peddlers."

Superintendent Weis said: "Much of the violence that plagues far too many communities in Chicago is driven by guns, gangs and drugs. The targets of Operation Bird Cage victimized local residents with drug sales. Taking these individuals off the street will have a real, positive impact on the quality of life for Chicago residents."

Ms. Alvarez said: "The results of this operation show clearly how police and prosecutors are working together to dig in at the local level, share information with all of our law enforcement partners, and bring all possible resources to bear to effectively target the gang members who are most responsible for the sale and distribution of illegal drugs on the streets of Chicago and Cook County."

The investigation, code-named Operation Bird Cage, which began in October 2009, is part of a sustained, coordinated effort by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to dismantle the leadership of Chicago's highly-organized, and often-violent, drug-trafficking street gangs. The investigation employed wiretaps, cooperating witnesses, undercover surveillance and drug transactions, and a steady progression of searches and seizures of evidence.

A five-count criminal complaint filed Tuesday and unsealed yesterday alleges that Bostic leads a faction of the New Breeds and controlled "an open air drug market" in the area bordered by Pulaski, Kostner, Jackson and Congress Parkway. A gas station and a grocery store are among the alleged drug "spots" in the vicinity where Bostic's organization sold heroin. Members of Bostic's drug organization allegedly met customers near busy city transit stations, providing a lucrative market, according to a 230-page affidavit by a Chicago DEA agent.

The charges allege that the drug spots within Bostic's area taken together sell drugs totaling as much as \$10,000 per day. The sales consisted primarily of "dime bags," that is, small plastic bags or tinfoil wrappers that contained approximately 0.1 gram of drugs each and sold for \$10 per unit. The dime bags were packaged from larger quantities of drugs obtained by the drug spot street supervisors, according to the complaint.

Bostic allegedly controlled the sale of heroin in his territory by purchasing quantities of heroin -- recently 100 to 200 grams every two to four days -- from his suppliers that he then mixed with additive and packages for distribution by his workers. Bostic and the New Breeds used violence, guns --

which they referred to as "somethin'," "gym shoes," and "toys" -- and the threat of violence to control their territory and protect their narcotics operation, the complaint alleges.

According to the affidavit, the New Breeds street gang originated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, initially as a splinter group from the Black Gangsters (one of the three factions of the original Black Gangster Disciples, the other two being the Gangster Disciples and the Black Disciples.) The New Breeds ultimately absorbed the Black Gangsters back into the gang, operating under the new name, "New Breeds." The New Breeds are primarily located on the west side of Chicago, and their main source of income is the sale of heroin.

According to the federal complaint, Bostic obtained heroin from various drug suppliers, including Eddie Valentino. At times, Bostic used Brandon Richards to broker drug deals with his suppliers and wholesale customers. Bostic, with the assistance of Richards, Christopher Hunter, James Kirkendall, Ladonta Gill and others, processed and packaged heroin in small packets containing personal-use quantities designed for individual re-sale. Richards and Hunter delivered the re-packaged heroin to Aaron Bagley, for distribution to street supervisors in Bostic's drug organization, including Dandre London, Raynard Bowser, Maurice Davis, Tommy Moore, Gill and Cornelius Thomas. The street supervisors distributed packs of user-quantities of heroin to street sellers, including Raymond McLain, Derek Thomas, Tommy Adams, Norman Thompson, and Parish Mitchell. Bostic also allegedly supplied larger, wholesale quantities of heroin to Donnie Ackers, an alleged leader of the Dirty Unknown Vice Lords; Jonathan Moore; and Kyle Morris, an alleged leader of the Sniper Four Corner Hustlers; and others.

Bostic, assisted by Richards, Hunter, Kirkendall, Gill and others, used different locations, or "stash houses," to process and package the heroin, including: Kirkendall's residence at 1422 Gunderson in Berwyn from February to April 2010, and Gill's apartment located at 1240 South 55th Ct., Unit 3W, in Cicero from April 2010 to the present.

Bostic allegedly obtained wholesale quantities of heroin from sources, including Eddie Valentino, who was supplied by Guevara, and Eddie Valentino allegedly returned the proceeds he collected from Bostic to Guevara. The charges allege that Guevara also supplied heroin to other wholesale customers.

All but two of the 26 federal defendants were charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute more than 1,000 grams of heroin, while the other two, Kyle Morris and Parris Fultz, were charged with narcotics possession. The federal defendants arrested yesterday remain in federal custody pending detention hearings scheduled at various times next week, and all were scheduled for a preliminary hearing on Aug. 23, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Michael Mason in Federal Court.

Facing state narcotics charges arising from the investigation are Dwayne Johnson, 26, who was arrested yesterday and will appear in Bond Court today; Deshawn Williams, 21, who was arrested previously, and a state warrant was issued for Eric Hawkins, 21, all of Chicago.

If convicted, each federal defendant charged in the drug conspiracies faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment without parole and a maximum fine of \$4 million. Morris faces a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 40 years in prison and a \$2 million fine, while Fultz faces a maximum of a year in prison and a \$100,000 fine. Note, however, that the Court would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant United States Attorneys Megan Church, Bethany Biesenthal and Yasmin Best.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.