



U. S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
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“MASSIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATION NETS 24 FEDERAL ARRESTS TODAY IN SPOKANE, SEATTLE & TACOMA”

SPOKANE – United States Attorney James A. McDevitt, joined today by Spokane Chief of Police Anne Kirkpatrick, Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich, Spokane Valley Chief of Police Richard VanLeuven, Washington State Patrol Chief John R. Batiste, FBI Seattle Special Agent-in-Charge Laura M. Laughlin, ATF Special Agent-in-Charge Kelvin Crenshaw, United States Marshal Michael L. Kline, and DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Arnold R. Moorin announced the results of a joint law enforcement operation targeting gang activity in the Spokane region.

Today, multiple indictments were unsealed which charge over 40 federal crimes against 24 members and associates of the Crips and Gangster Disciples gangs. Numerous counts of distribution of methamphetamine, cocaine, ecstasy, nemesis and other drugs were charged. Some were charged as convicted felons in possession of firearms. The sealed indictments were returned on June 24, 2008, by a federal grand jury.

An indictment also charged a gang associate with two counts of coercing juvenile females to engage in prostitution. This child exploitation enterprise was fueled by Internet advertisements.

This morning, during a massive law enforcement operation involving more than 175 federal, state and local authorities, 20 of the defendants were arrested in the Spokane area, while 4 were arrested in Tacoma and Seattle. Another 11 were arrested on state charges. Authorities continue to search for others. Over 20 federal search warrants were executed in connection with these arrests.

Today’s operation caps an 18 month-long investigation conducted by the Spokane Violent Crime Gang Enforcement Team. This case highlights a progressive law enforcement model in which federal authorities work shoulder-to-shoulder with their local and state

counterparts to investigate and dismantle gang criminal enterprises. "Without these model partnerships among our local, state and federal authorities, this type of tremendous effort to stem the growing wave of criminal gang activity would not be possible," said U.S. Attorney James A. McDevitt. "It is exactly this type of collaborative law enforcement effort that will enable us to continue to effectively counter these criminals, and prevent the tragic loss, counted in addiction, wasted lives, and broken families, that follow in their wake."

FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Laura M. Laughlin noted "This case clearly illustrates the destructive nature of these criminal enterprises. Not only are they alleged to have distributed illegal drugs throughout the community, but at least one member of the group is alleged to have victimized children by forcing them into prostitution. The FBI is committed to protecting children from those who exploit them and subjecting the victimizers to the full force of the criminal justice system."

"Far too many Spokane residents are subject to the influence of gangs and the damage they inflict on our community," said Spokane Chief of Police Anne Kirkpatrick. "We will not allow this, and so the fight against the crime that gangs breed will remain one of the top priorities of the Spokane Police Department. Today's arrests are the product of a close and continuing partnership, and a willingness to use every tool at our disposal to stamp out this kind of gang activity."

Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich remarked "Our residents deserve a safe environment in which to live, to raise their children and not worry about being victims of criminal gang activity. Local and state law enforcement officers, in concert with our federal partners, delivered a message that child prostitution, illegal drug distribution, and gun violence will not be tolerated. Reinforcing the close relationship throughout all levels of law enforcement that you see here today remains one of my highest priorities."

ATF Special Agent-in-Charge Kelvin Crenshaw commented "We've all seen firsthand the devastation that gang activities can have in a community. Today, gangs are more violent, more organized, and more widespread than ever before. By removing these gang members and associates from our streets, we can reclaim our neighborhoods so our neighbors and children can enjoy their freedom without fear of injury or drug dealers."

The defendants charged in the indictments are as follows:

1. Coby C. Adams, age 30
2. Michael Bernard, age 39
3. Amy M. Bevers, age 29
4. Robert Brown, age 29
5. Micheal D. Charles, age 23

6. Micheal J. Charles, age 30
7. Marcus S. Dansby, age 25
8. Roland W. Finney, age 33
9. Nehemiah W. Fowlkes, age 27
10. Shelana L. Gardner, age 22
11. Marc George, age 31
12. Sherard W. Henderson, age 35
13. Jeremiah Jones, age 30
14. Anthony Lawrence, age 37
15. Jabari M. McCaskill, age 25
16. Wayne D. McDuffie, age 29
17. Marquis Mitchell, age 32
18. Samuel R. Pernell, age 28
19. Patrick O. Sardin, age 35
20. Vanessa L. Seavers, age 20
21. Carol Solomon, age 31
22. Corrine Stewart, age 22
23. Jakekeyeda Q. Walker, age 33
24. Christopher M. Williams, age 24

The drug distribution charges carry potential sentences of up to 20 years imprisonment or more; the firearm offenses carry up to 10 years imprisonment; and coercing juveniles into prostitution carries up to 20 years in prison.

The Spokane Violent Crime Gang Enforcement Team is an FBI Safe Streets Task Force. Since January 1992, the FBI the Safe Streets Violent Crime Initiative has grown to include 146 task forces across the nation. This program, administered by the FBI's Safe Streets and Gang Unit, allows each FBI Field Division to address violent street gangs and drug-related violence

through the establishment of long-term, proactive task forces focusing on violent gangs and crimes of violence. The Spokane Violent Crime Gang Enforcement Team is also funded by Project Safe Neighborhoods, a national program designed to reduce gun crime in America by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing these programs with additional funding, training and tools.

In the last few years, the Department of Justice has taken several important steps to address the prevalence of gang violence. First, the Department established an Anti-Gang Coordination Committee to organize the Department's wide-ranging efforts to combat gangs. Second, each United States Attorney has appointed an Anti-Gang Coordinator to provide leadership and focus to our anti-gang efforts at the district level. Finally, the Anti-Gang Coordinators, in consultation with their state and local law enforcement and community partners, have developed comprehensive, district-wide strategies to address the gang problems in their districts.

The agencies involved in the operation include the Spokane County Sheriff's Office, the Spokane Police Department, the Washington State Patrol, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the United States Marshals Service, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Protective Service, the Washington State Gambling Commission, the Washington State Department of Corrections, the Spokane Regional Drug Task Force, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, the Tri-Cities Violent Gang Task Force, and the North Idaho Regional Violent Crime Task Force.

An Indictment Contains Allegations That a Defendant Has Committed a Crime. Every Defendant Is Presumed Innocent Until and Unless Proven Guilty Beyond a Reasonable Doubt.