



PRESS RELEASE

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NORTHERN DISTRICT OF WEST VIRGINIA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Multi-State Raid Nets 20 Arrests
On Drug & Firearms Charges**

CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA — Twenty individuals were arrested this morning by law enforcement officers in two simultaneous raids in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and in the Central West Virginia area.

United States Attorney Sharon L. Potter announced that the 20 arrests this morning resulted from charges contained in a 65-count Indictment returned by a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Clarksburg on September 3, 2008. The Indictment is the culmination of a one-year joint investigation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the Harrison/Lewis County Drug & Violent Crime Task Force into illegal drug and firearm activity in the Central West Virginia area.

In addition to the 20 individuals arrested, three individuals are in custody on unrelated charges and law enforcement officers are looking for three additional defendants.

Charges in the Indictment include a conspiracy by 26 individuals to distribute more than 50 grams of cocaine base, also known as “crack,” from September 2007 to September 2008 in Bridgeport, Clarksburg, Shinnston, Kingmont, White Hall and elsewhere. The Indictment also includes charges of conspiracy to violate federal firearms laws and violations of federal firearms laws, including “straw purchases”; and multiple counts of possession of “crack” with the intent to distribute and the distribution of “crack.” Many of the possession and distribution charges occurred with 1,000 feet of protected areas in Clarksburg, including Washington Irving Middle School and four playgrounds, which doubles the penalties involved. Seven counts of the Indictment include charges that premises were maintained in Clarksburg, Bridgeport, and Shinnston to use and distribute “crack.”

Those arrested include: SHANNON ROSE AMSLER, age 22, of Clarksburg; HOLLY NEIL BENNETT, age 34, of Clarksburg; JOANNA FLESHER, age 24, of Bridgeport; BRIAN DALE GABBERT, age 33, of Rivesville; JAMES RICHARD GILLESPIE, also known as “JIM,” age 55, of Clarksburg; COREY GRAY, also known as “DUTCH,” age 18, of McKeesport, Pennsylvania; KARA HANNAH, age 25, of Clarksburg; DANITA HOLYFIELD, also known as “D,” age 36; VINCENT JENKINS, also known as “VINCE,” age 43, of McKeesport; DAVID JOHNSON, age 38, of Mt. Clare; KENNETH KENNEDY, also known as “RICKY,” age 21, of McKeesport; CLOYD LILLEY, age 51, of Shinnston; STACY MARIE LONGWELL, age 21, of Four States; PERCY JAMES LOVE, also known as “ACE,” age

19; AMBER DAWN MERRIFIELD, age 23, of Shinnston; MONTE' MOORE, also known as "MARCUS," age 20, of McKeesport; DESMOND DEVON SIMMONS, also known as "KNOCK-OUT," age 22, of McKeesport; KYLE TORRES, also known as "TAY," age 22; DANIELLE ARLENE WAGNER, age 20, of Versailles, Pennsylvania; and SANTANA WYGANT, also known as "FACE," of McKeesport.

The following defendants are in custody on unrelated charges: KEVIN WAYNE BENNETT, age 36, of Clarksburg; TERRANCE WALKINS, also known as "TERRANCE WALKER," also known as "T," age 27; and LEONARD WYGANT, also known as "PRIMO," also known as "JUSTIN," age 26.

Law enforcement officers are seeking the arrest of: FNU LNU, also known as "NICK,,"; ANGELO D. MELEGARI, also known as "TYLER," age 33, of Pittsburgh; and STACY MARIE WOODS, age 39, of Fairmont.

U. S. Attorney Potter stated, "The coordinated approach by federal, state, and local law enforcement resulted in a safe and efficient operation this morning to effect simultaneous arrests; execution of a search warrant; and seizure of firearms, ammunition, currency, and controlled substances. The officers across state lines should be praised for the collaborative effort and team work present during this ongoing investigation."

Paul J. Vido, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Louisville Field Division said, "The results of this year long investigation shows ATF's continued commitment to work closely with our local law enforcement partners, like the Harrison/Lewis Drug Task Force and the McKeesport Police Department to combat violent crime."

A "straw purchase" is any purchase of a firearm where the buyer is not eligible to own the purchased firearm according to the law and therefore purchases the firearm through a proxy buyer. Vido explained, "During this investigation, the straw purchases were committed by individuals who knew that the handguns they bought were ultimately going into the hands of known drug dealers."

Vido reiterated that "Handguns are the tools used by violent drug dealers and the straw purchases of these weapons will not be tolerated. Our number one goal is to keep the communities we serve safe."

Speaking on behalf of the members of the Harrison/Lewis County Drug & Violent Crime Task Force Control Board, Harrison County Sheriff James "Jim" Jack expressed his sincerest compliments on the initiative. "Our Task Force may be smaller but with respect to ability, in comparison, it is second to none. I would like to thank each and every one of the members for their continued hard work, sleepless nights, and dedication to the cause, on behalf of the Control Board, which I know it will continue throughout this prosecution. "

According to U. S. Attorney Potter, a search warrant was executed at a Bridgeport motel room in connection with an arrest this morning, and law enforcement officers seized approximately \$3,500 in cash, a .22 caliber pistol, and approximately two to three ounces of "crack" cocaine. Also, during the arrests in Pennsylvania this morning, law enforcement officers seized a loaded Glock .40 caliber pistol; an Arms Corporation, Model AK-47 Flash .22, .22 caliber rifle; and a loaded Thermo Dynamics Systems .357 magnum revolver.

Specific charges in the Indictment include:

Count One of the Indictment alleges that SHANNON ROSE AMSLER; HOLLY NEIL BENNETT; KEVIN WAYNE BENNETT; JOANNA FLESHER; BRIAN DALE GABBERT; JAMES RICHARD GILLESPIE, also known as "JIM,;" COREY GRAY, also known as "DUTCH,;" KARA HANNAH; DANITA HOLYFIELD, also known as "D,;" VINCENT JENKINS, also known as "VINCE,;" DAVID JOHNSON; KENNETH KENNEDY, also known as "RICKY,;" CLOYD LILLEY; FNU LNU, also known as "NICK,;" STACY MARIE LONGWELL; PERCY JAMES LOVE, also known as "ACE,;" ANGELO D. MELEGARI, also known as "TYLER,;" AMBER DAWN MERRIFIELD;

MONTE' MOORE, also known as "MARCUS;" DESMOND DEVON SIMMONS, also known as "KNOCK-OUT;" KYLE TORRES, also known as "TAY;" DANIELLE ARLENE WAGNER; TERRANCE WALKINS, also known as "TERRANCE WALKER," also known as "T;" STACY MARIE WOODS; LEONARD WYGANT, also known as "PRIMO," also known as "JUSTIN;" and SANTANA WYGANT, also known as "FACE," conspired to distribute 50 grams or more of cocaine base, also known as "crack," between September 2007 and September 2008 in Bridgeport, Clarksburg, Shinnston, Kingmont, and White Hall in the Northern District of West Virginia and elsewhere.

SHANNON ROSE AMSLER was named in five additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Ten and Eleven of the Indictment allege that AMSLER distributed "crack" within 1,000 feet of Broadway Park playground in Clarksburg on November 30, 2007. Counts Twelve and Thirteen of the Indictment allege that AMSLER distributed "crack" in Clarksburg on December 6, 2007. Count Sixty-Two of the Indictment alleges that AMSLER maintained a drug-involved premise from November 2007 to September 2008 in Clarksburg.

HOLLY NEIL BENNETT was named in three additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Fifty-Nine and Sixty of the Indictment allege that BENNETT distributed "crack" within 1,000 feet of Washington Irving Middle School in Clarksburg on July 21, 2008; and within 1,000 feet of Jackson Park playground in Clarksburg on July 22, 2008. Count Six-Five of the Indictment alleges that BENNETT maintained a drug-involved premise from April 2008 to September 2008 in Clarksburg.

KEVIN WAYNE BENNETT was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Six-Five of the Indictment alleges that BENNETT maintained a drug-involved premise from April 2008 to September 2008 in Clarksburg.

JOANNA FLESHER was named in three additional counts of the Indictment. Count Thirty-One of the Indictment alleges that FLESHER conspired to violate federal firearms laws on February 15, 2008, in Clarksburg. Count Thirty-Two of the Indictment alleges that FLESHER knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on February 15, 2008. Count Thirty-Three of the Indictment alleges that FLESHER transferred and delivered a firearm to a person that was not a resident of the State of West Virginia on February 15, 2008.

BRIAN DALE GABBERT was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Forty-Nine of the Indictment alleges that GABBERT distributed "crack" in Kingmont on April 17, 2008.

JAMES RICHARD GILLESPIE was named in seven additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Five, Seven, Thirteen, Fourteen, Twenty-Five, and Twenty-Eight of the Indictment allege that GILLESPIE distributed "crack" on November 2, 2007; on November 13, 2007; on December 6, 2007; on December 17, 2007; on February 4, 2008; and on February 8, 2008, in Clarksburg. Count Sixty-Three of the Indictment alleges that GILLESPIE maintained a drug-involved premise from November 2007 to September 2008 in Clarksburg.

COREY GRAY was named in four additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Eight and Twenty-Seven of the Indictment allege that GRAY possessed with intent to distribute more than five grams of "crack" on November 16, 2007, in Bridgeport, and on February 8, 2008, in Clarksburg. Count Nine of the Indictment alleges that GRAY maintained a drug-involved premise on November 16, 2007, in Bridgeport. Count Twenty-Six of the Indictment alleges that GRAY distributed "crack" on February 8, 2008, in Clarksburg.

KARA HANNAH was named in five additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Thirty-Nine, Forty-Four, and Forty-Seven of the Indictment allege that HANNAH distributed "crack" within 1,000 feet of Hartland Park playground in Clarksburg on March 26, 2008; on April 2, 2008; and on April 10, 2008. Count Forty-Eight of the Indictment alleges that HANNAH possessed "crack" with the intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of Hartland Park playground in Clarksburg on April 10, 2008. Count Sixty-Four of the Indictment alleges that HANNAH maintained a drug-involved premise from March 2008 to September 2008 in Clarksburg.

DANITA HOLYFIELD was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Thirty-Seven of the Indictment alleges that HOLYFIELD distributed “crack” on March 19, 2008, in Shinnston.

VINCENT JENKINS was named in two additional counts of the Indictment. Count Forty-Two of the Indictment alleges that JENKINS unlawfully possessed a firearm on April 1, 2008, in Shinnston, after being previously convicted of delivery of marijuana, possession with intent to deliver marijuana, and possession of marijuana. Count Forty-Three of the Indictment alleges that JENKINS knowingly possessed a stolen firearm on April 1, 2008.

DAVID JOHNSON was named in two additional counts of the Indictment. Count Seventeen of the Indictment alleges that JOHNSON conspired to violate federal firearms laws between January 18, 2008, and January 24, 2008, in Clarksburg. Count Eighteen of the Indictment alleges that JOHNSON knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on January 18, 2008, in Clarksburg.

KENNETH KENNEDY was named in three additional counts of the Indictment. Count Two of the Indictment alleges that KENNEDY conspired to violate federal firearms laws in October 2007 in Clarksburg. Count Three of the Indictment alleges that KENNEDY knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on October 15, 2007. Count Six of the Indictment alleges that KENNEDY distributed “crack” in Clarksburg on November 7, 2007.

CLOYD LILLEY was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Sixty-One of the Indictment alleges that maintained a drug-involved premise from September 2007 to September 2008 in Shinnston.

FNU LNU, also known as “NICK,” was named in two additional counts of the Indictment. Count Twenty-Eight of the Indictment alleges that FNU LNU distributed “crack” in Clarksburg on February 8, 2008. Count Twenty-Nine of the Indictment alleges that FNU LNU possessed “crack” with the intent to distribute in Clarksburg on February 8, 2008.

STACY MARIE LONGWELL was named in two additional counts of the Indictment. Count Forty-Five of the Indictment alleges that LONGWELL distributed “crack” within 1,000 feet of Washington Irving Middle School in Clarksburg on April 2, 2008. Count Forty-Six of the Indictment alleges that LONGWELL distributed “crack” in Shinnston on April 3, 2008.

PERCY JAMES LOVE was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Four of the Indictment alleges that LOVE distributed “crack” in Shinnston on September 19, 2007.

ANGELO D. MELEGARI was named in three additional counts of the Indictment. Count Thirty-One of the Indictment alleges that MELEGARI conspired to violate federal firearms laws on February 15, 2008, in Clarksburg. Count Thirty-Two of the Indictment alleges that MELEGARI knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on February 15, 2008. Count Thirty-Four of the Indictment alleges that MELEGARI, who was under Indictment in the Criminal Division of the Court of Common Pleas for Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, for Robbery, unlawfully received a firearm in Clarksburg on February 15, 2008.

AMBER DAWN MERRIFIELD was named in three additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Forty-Nine, Fifty, and Fifty-Three of the Indictment allege that MERRIFIELD distributed “crack” in Kingmont on April 17, 2008; in White Hall on April 23, 2008; and in Shinnston on May 16, 2008.

MONTE’ MOORE was named in five additional counts of the Indictment. Count Two of the Indictment alleges that MOORE conspired to violate federal firearms laws in October 2007 in Clarksburg. Count Three of the Indictment alleges that MOORE knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on October 15, 2007. Count Twenty-Six of the Indictment alleges that MOORE distributed “crack” in Clarksburg on February 8, 2008. Count Thirty-Five of the Indictment alleges that MOORE distributed

“crack” within 1,000 feet of Hartland Park playground in Clarksburg on March 13, 2008. Count Thirty-Six of the Indictment alleges that MOORE possessed more than five grams of “crack” within 1,000 feet of Hartland Park playground with the intent to distribute on March 13, 2008.

DESMOND DEVON SIMMONS was named in 10 additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Fourteen, Fifteen, and Fifty-Eight of the Indictment allege that SIMMONS distributed “crack” on two occasions in Clarksburg on December 17, 2007; and on July 21, 2008, in Shinnston. Counts Sixteen and Thirty of the Indictment allege that SIMMONS possessed more than five grams of “crack” with the intent to distribute in Clarksburg on December 17, 2007; and in Bridgeport on February 13, 2008. Count Seventeen of the Indictment alleges that SIMMONS conspired to violate federal firearms laws between January 18, 2008, and January 24, 2008, in Clarksburg. Count Eighteen of the Indictment alleges that SIMMONS knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on January 18, 2008, in Clarksburg. Counts Thirty-Eight and Fifty-Six of the Indictment allege that SIMMONS distributed “crack” within 1,000 feet of Hartland Park playground in Clarksburg of March 20, 2008; and within 1,000 feet of Washington Irving Middle School in Clarksburg on May 27, 2008. Count Fifty-Seven of the Indictment alleges that SIMMONS possessed more than five grams of “crack” within 1,000 feet of Washington Irving Middle School in Clarksburg with the intent to distribute on May 27, 2008.

KYLE TORRES was named in five additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Twenty-One, Twenty-Two, and Fifty-Four of the Indictment allege that TORRES distributed “crack” in Clarksburg on two occasions on January 23, 2008; and in Shinnston on May 20, 2008. Count Twenty-Four of the Indictment alleges that TORRES possessed more than five grams of “crack” with the intent to distribute in Clarksburg on January 23, 2008. Count Fifty-Five of the Indictment alleges that TORRES possessed “crack” with the intent to distribute in Shinnston on May 20, 2008.

DANIELLE ARLENE WAGNER was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Thirty of the Indictment alleges that WAGNER possessed more than five grams of “crack” with the intent to distribute in Bridgeport on February 13, 2008.

TERRANCE WALKINS was named in four additional counts of the Indictment. Count Forty of the Indictment alleges that WALKINS distributed “crack” in Bridgeport on March 26, 2008. Count Forty-One of the Indictment alleges that WALKINS maintained a drug-involved premise on March 26, 2008, in Bridgeport. Counts Fifty-One and Fifty-Two of the Indictment allege that WALKINS distributed “crack” within 1,000 feet of North View Park playground in Clarksburg on two occasions on April 29, 2008.

STACY MARIE WOODS was named in one additional count of the Indictment. Count Four of the Indictment alleges that WOODS distributed “crack” in Shinnston on September 19, 2007.

LEONARD WYGANT was named in nine additional counts of the Indictment. Counts Two and Seventeen of the Indictment allege that WYGANT conspired to violate federal firearms laws in October 2007; and between January 18, 2008, and January 24, 2008, in Clarksburg. Counts Three and Eighteen of the Indictment allege that WYGANT knowingly made false statements and representations to a federal firearms licensee during the purchase of a firearm on October 15, 2007, and on January 18, 2008. Counts Nineteen, Twenty-One, and Twenty-Two of the Indictment allege that WYGANT distributed “crack” in Clarksburg on January 18, 2008; and on two occasions on January 23, 2008. Counts Twenty and Twenty-Three of the Indictment allege that WYGANT possessed more than five grams of “crack” with the intent to distribute in Clarksburg on January 18, 2008, and on January 23, 2008.

SANTANA WYGANT was named in a one additional count of the Indictment. Count Eleven of the Indictment alleges that WYGANT distributed “crack” within 1,000 feet of the Broadway Park playground in Clarksburg on November 30, 2007.

Assisting ATF and the Harrison/Lewis County Drug & Violent Crime Task Force in the investigation were the West Virginia State Police - Bureau of Criminal, Fairmont Detachment; and the Three Rivers Drug Task Force.

The Harrison/Lewis County Drug & Violent Crime Task Force consists of officers from the Clarksburg Police Department, the Harrison County Sheriff's Department, the Bridgeport Police Department, the Lewis County Sheriff's Department, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The Three Rivers Drug Task Force consists of officers from the Fairmont Police Department and the Marion County Sheriff's Department.

The law enforcement officers involved in the arrests in Pennsylvania included ATF from the Northern District of West Virginia and the Western District of Pennsylvania; the Pennsylvania State Police; the Pittsburgh Police Department; and the McKeesport Police Department.

The law enforcement officers involved in the arrests in Central West Virginia included ATF; the Harrison/Lewis County Drug & Violent Crime Task Force; United States Marshal Service; and uniformed officers from the Clarksburg Police Department, Bridgeport Police Department, and the Harrison County Sheriff's Department.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Shawn Angus Morgan.

If convicted, the defendants face the following maximum penalties: 10 years to life imprisonment and a fine of \$4,000,000 on Count One of the Indictment; five years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000 each on Counts Two, Three, Seventeen, Eighteen, Thirty-One, Thirty-Two, Thirty-Three & Thirty-Four of the Indictment; 20 years imprisonment and a fine of \$1,000,000 each on Counts Four, Five, Six, Seven, Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen, Nineteen, Twenty-One, Twenty-Two, Twenty-Five, Twenty-Six, Twenty-Eight, Twenty-Nine, Thirty-Seven, Forty, Forty-Six, Forty-Nine, Fifty, Fifty-Three, Fifty-Four, Fifty-Five & Fifty-Eight of the Indictment; five to 40 years imprisonment and a fine of \$2,000,000 each on Counts Eight, Sixteen, Twenty, Twenty-Three, Twenty-Four, Twenty-Seven & Thirty of the Indictment; one to 40 years imprisonment and a fine of \$2,000,000 each on Counts Ten, Eleven, Thirty-Five, Thirty-Eight, Thirty-Nine, Forty-Four, Forty-Five, Forty-Seven, Forty-Eight, Fifty-One, Fifty-Two, Fifty-Six, Fifty-Seven, Fifty-Nine & Sixty of the Indictment; five to 80 years imprisonment and a fine of \$4,000,000 on Count Thirty-Six of the Indictment; 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000 each on Counts Forty-Two & Forty-Three of the Indictment; 20 years imprisonment and a fine of \$500,000 each on Counts Nine, Sixty-One, Sixty-Two, Forty-One, Sixty-Three, Sixty-Four & Sixty-Five of the Indictment.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE CHARGES CONTAINED IN THE INDICTMENT ARE MERELY ACCUSATIONS AND NOT EVIDENCE OF GUILT, AND THAT EACH DEFENDANT IS PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.