



Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Anne M. Tompkins
Western District of North Carolina**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, December 18, 2013
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ncw>

CONTACT: Lia Bantavani
704-338-3140
Lia.Bantavani@usdoj.gov

**TWELVE MEMBERS OF METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING RING
FACE DRUG CHARGES**

Seven Arrested during Round-up; Three Remain Fugitives

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – Twelve members of a methamphetamine trafficking ring have been charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine. Seven of those charged were arrested on Tuesday, December 10, 2013, during an early morning round-up conducted by federal, state and local law enforcement, announced Anne M. Tompkins, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. Three of the named defendants remain fugitives (please see attached photos).

U.S. Attorney Tompkins is joined in making today's announcement by Harry S. Sommers, Special Agent in Charge of the Atlanta Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which oversees the Charlotte District Office and Wayne L. Dixie, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

The arrests are the result of a multi-agency investigation to target and reduce the trafficking of methamphetamine in Western North Carolina and was conducted by DEA, ATF, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the Marion Police Department, the McDowell County Sheriff's Office, the Yancey County Sheriff's Office, the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office, as well as the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, the Cowpens Police Department and the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office in South Carolina.

According to allegations contained in the criminal indictment unsealed on Wednesday, December 11, 2013 in U.S. District Court, from about June 2012 to July 2012, the defendants did knowingly conspire to possess with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of actual methamphetamine or more than 500 grams of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine. The indictment alleges that the defendants carried out their drug conspiracy primarily in Buncombe, Cleveland and McDowell counties in Western North Carolina.

The following individuals were named and charged in the methamphetamine conspiracy indictment.

- George Wade Cook (a/k/a “Rooster”), 52 , of Caser, N.C. (in custody)
- Gergory Ray DeHart, 44, of Marion, N.C. (in custody)
- Ramona Jamison Lail, 48 ,of Marion. (in custody)
- Jimmy Dwayne Lawing (a/k/a “Dick”), 45 of Marion. (in custody)
- Carlos Alvarado Mendoza (a/k/a “Tequila”), 39 of Candler, N.C. (in custody)
- John Louis Pivonka, 42 of Marion. (in custody)
- Tommy Ray Sisk, 56 of Old Fort, N.C. (in custody)
- John Matthew Frady, (a/k/a “Ghost”), 39, of Cowpens, S.C. (in state custody)
- Jeffrey Kirkland, 41, of Gainesville, Ga. (in federal custody in Georgia)
- Miguel Santos-Maldonado (a/k/a “Mateo Segura”), 42, of Gainesville, Ga. (fugitive)
- Rigoberto Alvarado Mendoza (a/k/a “Big Boy”), 42 of Arden, N.C.(fugitive)
- Taide Alvarado Vergara, 27, of Candler. (fugitive)

All twelve defendants in the methamphetamine trafficking ring have been charged with engaging in a narcotics conspiracy and they face a statutory minimum prison term of ten years and a maximum term of life imprisonment, and a \$10 million fine. (See chart below for a breakdown of additional federal charges and maximum penalties for each defendant).

The seven defendants arrested in North Carolina had their arraignment and detention hearings on Monday, December 16, 2013, before U.S. District Court before U.S. Magistrate Judge Dennis L. Howell. All seven were detained pending trial.

The charges contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The investigation is being handled by DEA, ATF, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the Marion Police Department, the McDowell County Sheriff’s Office, the Yancey County Sheriff’s Office, the Rutherford County Sheriff’s Office, as well as the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, the Cowpens Police Department and the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Office in South Carolina.

The prosecution is being handled for the government by Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Kent of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Asheville.

###

CASE NO.	DEFENDANT	COUNTS	CHARGE	STATUTORY PENALTIES
1:13cr79	George Wade Cook a/k/a Rooster	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
		24	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	Gregory Ray Dehart	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000

	3	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	5	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	6	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	7	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	8	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	9	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	10	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	12	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	13	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	14	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	15	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	16	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	27	Distribution of a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
John Matthew Frady a/k/a Ghost	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	4	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	11	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	24	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	28	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	29	Felon in Possession of Firearms	0 to 10 years in prison, maximum fine of \$250,000
Jeffrey Kirkland	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	22	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
Ramona Jamison Lail	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	15	Possession with Intent to Distribute a	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000

		Controlled Substance	
	16	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	25	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
Jimmy Dwayne Lawing a/k/a Dick	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	17	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	18	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	19	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	20	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
Miguel Santos- Maldonado a/k/a Mateo Segura	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	21	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	22	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
Carlos Alvarado Mendoza a/k/a Tequila	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	2	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	25	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	30	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
Rigoberto Alvarado Mendoza a/k/a Big Boy	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	17	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	18	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	19	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	20	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000

	21	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	22	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	24	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	25	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	28	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
John Louis Pivonka	1	Narcotics Conspiracy	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	2	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	23	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	26	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	Tommy Ray Sisk	1	Narcotics Conspiracy
	11	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000
	14	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	Taide Alvarado Vergara	1	Narcotics Conspiracy
	17	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	18	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	19	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	5 to 40 years in prison, maximum fine of \$5,000,000
	20	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	0 to 20 years in prison, maximum fine of \$1,000,000
	28	Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Substance	10 years to life in prison, maximum fine of \$10,000,000