# JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE



# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

jacksoncountycombat.com/taskforce

### **JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE HISTORY**

In 1986, the Jackson County Missouri Drug Task Force (Task Force) was organized as a multijurisdictional investigative initiative in response to an emerging drug problem within the county. Throughout the 1980's, drug trafficking and an active drug culture were a part of daily life throughout Kansas City, Missouri, and much of Jackson County. Illicit drugs, such as crack cocaine, methamphetamine, and PCP, were openly traded on street corners. Drug houses and methamphetamine labs literally sprung up throughout our county overnight. During its initial years, the Task Force was funded through private donations and one grant.

In 1989, Jackson County voters approved a new one-quarter of one-percent anti-drug sales tax, which later became known as the Community Backed Anti-Crime Tax (COMBAT). The tax would support a broad-based attack on drug abuse and drug-related violent crimes. One of the enforcement initiatives of COMBAT funding was the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

The tax was renewed for seven-year periods in 1995, 2004, 2009 and 2016. The COMBAT tax now entirely funds the JCDTF, providing the Task Force with an adjusted budget of \$2,280,532 in 2019.

### JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE MISSION

The County of Jackson has approximately 604.84 square miles. With a population of 700,307 according to the Census Bureau, Jackson County is the second most populous of Missouri's counties, after St. Louis County. The Task Force primarily focuses on the eastern and southern portions of the county, which includes all suburban jurisdictions and unincorporated areas. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide a combined and unified response to the drug- and narcotics-related violent crime problem as it exists in Jackson County.

While Task Force participates with all federal, state and local Kansas City area law enforcement agencies, its primary investigative mission and focus continues to be on the outlying areas of the county, which are not adequately serviced by other agencies. In 2019, the Task Force participated in an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Homeland Security. These partnerships allowed the Task Force to be partially reimbursed for narcotics buy money and overtime costs associated with the federal investigations. The Task Force was actively involved in five OCDETF investigations in 2019.

In 2011, an agreement was signed with the Missouri National Guard to provide one Intelligence Analyst to assist with long-term investigations. This agreement continued in 2019.

A Task Force detective obtained a high-level security clearance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to assist in investigations involving large-scale Transnational Criminal Drug Organizations. Additionally, the Task Force is coordinating with the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Force to address the increasing problem of local gangs. These gangs have set up sophisticated distribution networks in Jackson County and are obtaining large amounts of illegal drugs from Mexican based Drug Trafficking Organizations.

# JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

The Jackson County Drug Task Force is a voluntary law enforcement organization that operates under the direction of an Executive Board comprised of representatives from fourteen (14) law enforcement agencies in Jackson County. Each of these law enforcement agencies has signed an Agreement for Law Enforcement Services with the Task Force.

The Executive Board of the Task Force includes the Police Chiefs from each of the participating cities and the Sheriff of Jackson County. A representative from the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation attend the Executive Board meetings in a spirit of cooperation and to coordinate efforts.

Seven (7) of the participating law enforcement agencies and the Jackson County Sherriff's Office contribute or "loan" manpower to the Task Force. All salaries, benefits, equipment and other associated costs with personnel assigned to the Task Force are reimbursed 100% by the Task Force. Costs for reimbursement are paid from grants and funding generated by the county-wide anti-crime sales tax (COMBAT) that provides funding for the Task Force.

Participating agencies include:

- > Blue Springs Police 3 Investigators
- > Buckner Police
- ➤ **Grain Valley Police** 1 Investigator (vacant)
- > Grandview Police 1 Sergeant, 2 Investigator
- Greenwood Police
- ➤ Independence Police 1 Sergeant, 1 Investigators (2 vacant)
- ➤ Jackson County 1 OIC, 1 Administrative, 1 Property Officer
- ➤ Jackson County Sheriff 3 Investigators, 1 Warrant Service Officer
- Lake Lotawana Police
- ➤ Lee's Summit Police 3 Investigators
- Lone Jack Police
- Missouri State Highway Patrol
- > Oak Grove Police 1 Investigator
- > Raytown Police
- > Sugar Creek Police 1 Investigator

The Task Force also has two positions on loan from the following:

- ➤ Missouri National Guard 1 Analyst (Non-Sworn)
- ➤ Drug Enforcement Administration 1 Special Agent (Sworn)

# KANSAS CITY METRO ORGANIZED CRIME DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE STRIKE FORCE

The Jackson County Drug Task Force has joined the newly formed Kansas City Metro Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Force (KCMSF). The Jackson County Drug Task Force is one of four local agencies participating in the KCMSF, along with the Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, police departments and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will be joining forces with multiple federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Department of Homeland Security; the Postal Inspection Service; and Internal Revenue Service.

The Kansas City metropolitan area is near the geographical center of the United States and at the intersection of several of the nation's busiest interstate highways, thus making it a major transit point for the transportation of drugs, firearms, and illicit proceeds to and from significant market areas across the country.

The KCMSF focus will be major criminal organizations, including criminal gangs, transnational drug cartels and other groups engaged in illicit activities that present a threat to public safety. The KCMSF will place special emphasis on addressing the significant methamphetamine threat identified in Jackson County and the Kansas City metropolitan area.

The KCMSF presents a united front against drug trafficking and violent crime throughout the metropolitan area coordinating agents and officers from both Missouri and Kansas with additional investigative resources to better protect our community from the violent scourge of drug trafficking.

Greater Kansas City joins these other metropolitan regions with Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Strike Forces: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, New York City, North Texas, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego, San Juan, southeast Michigan and Tampa.

### NATIONAL INTERGRATED BALLISTICS IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

In 2019 the Task Force established a program in which all recovered firearms will be test fired and the shell casings will be submitted into the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBEN) through the use of the Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBS).

NIBEN is a national network system administered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to assist Law Enforcement in solving firearms-related crimes. IBS is the collection of electronic images of ballistic evidence recovered from crime scenes and test fired firearms that have been taken into law enforcement custody. IBIS is a proven investigative and intelligence tool which can assist in the identification of leads that were not previously available, can link firearms evidence from multiple crimes committed with the same firearm and can link firearms evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm.

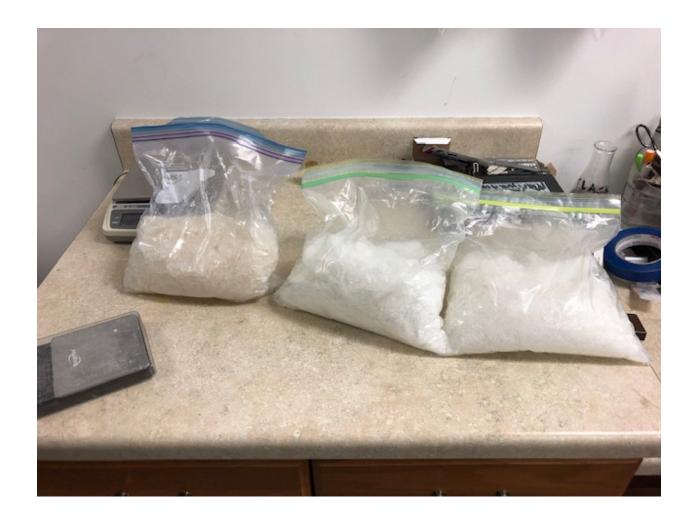
### **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED/PURCHASED**

2019	Marijuana	Methamphetamine	Crack/ Cocaine	MDMA	Heroin	THC	Pills
Grams	146,267.0	134,994.0	373.9	-	7,244.0	487.0	2,330.0
Pounds	323.0	297.0	0.8	-	16.0	1.1	



# VALUE OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED/PURCHASED

2019	N	Marijuana	Meth	amphetamine	Crack/	Cocaine	MDMA	Heroin	THC	/edibles	Pills
Value	\$	1,901,471	\$	25,783,854	\$	50,476	\$ -	\$2,500,052	\$	29,220	\$ 186,400



**TOTAL VALUE OF ALL CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES SEIZED** 

### \$30,451,473



### FIREARMS SEIZED/PURCHASED



Long Guns \$500 / each	Hand Guns \$400 / each			
61	65			
\$30,500	\$20,800			





### **STATISTICS**

Coses	Opened Case	Search, Scooped	tooc Adriants 21	Prese Prairies	Narcotics po	Money K	Meth labs &	Tocessed 7	Cessed
2010	149	67	71	78	6	178	\$140,602	7	8
2011	201	32	42	56	12	127	\$111,134	4	1
2012	124	206	73	66	10	180	\$411,048	1	3
2013	119	173	92	30	21	408	\$275,876	0	3
2014	74	208	48	48	1	158	\$424,762	0	2
2015	127	199	58	82	1	218	\$330,372	0	1
2016	132	301	61	21	4	170	\$136,261	1	0
2017	92	114	50	10	9	140	\$135,475	0	0
2018	80	110	50	6	8	170	\$302,206	0	2
2019	76	204	54	12	3	123	\$216,246	0	0

### **CASE COMPARISON**

Toral Cates Areas	redeta,	State	Cosec	Warrant	Detectives &	to of Scied No.	rogic
2010	52	5	47	227		14	\$1,054,321
2011	271	186	85	244		14	\$4,871,131
2012	339	250	89	427		13	\$4,116,215
2013	205	128	65	177		11	\$7,568,018
2014	204	106	98	209		11	\$8,894,042
2015	216	122	82	262	225	12	\$6,530,240
2016	290	215	75	292	222	13	\$5,218,156
2017	213	166	47	269	200	11	\$13,461,484
2018	92	65	27	187	94	14	\$16,149,483
2019	204	172	35	228	106	13	\$30,451,473

## PROSECUTION COMPARISON 2010 - 2019

### **Cases presented for prosecution**

Federal									
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
5	186	250	128	106	122	215	166	65	172

State									
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
47	85	89	65	98	82	75	47	27	35

### **2019 DRUG COMPLAINT REPORT**

During 2019, the Jackson County Drug Task Force received a total of 49 Drug Complaints. The following table is a statistical break down of the complaint location by jurisdiction and the sources from which the complaints were received.

Jurisdiction	Number of Complaints Received	%	Source of Received Complaints	%
Blue Springs	1	2.04%	'	
Buckner	0	0		
Grain Valley	0	0		
Grandview	1	2.04%		
Greenwood	0	0		
Independence	4	8.16%		
Jackson County	3	6.12%		
Kansas City, MO	35	71.42%		
Lake Lotawana	1	2.04%		
Lake Tapawingo	0	0		
Lee's Summit	1	2.04%		
Lone Jack	0	0		
Oak Grove	2	4.08%		
Raytown	1	2.04%		
Sibley	0	0		
Sugar Creek	0	0		
Tarsney Lake	0	0		
		100%		
COMBAT				
Confidential				
Informant				
Facebook			2	4.1%
Task Force			3	6.1%
Phone Tips				
Outside			7	14.3%
Agencies				
Tips Hotline			2	4.1%
Combat			35	71.4%

# JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

2019

### PRESS RELEASES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday, January 30, 2019

### **KC Woman Sentenced to 13 Years for Leading Meth Conspiracy**

### Two Co-conspirators Also Sentenced This Month

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., woman was sentenced in federal court today for her role in leading a large methamphetamine conspiracy.

Yadieras Y. Contreras, also known as "Fajita," 36, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Greg Kays to 13 years and nine months in federal prison without parole.

Contreras was the third defendant in this case to be sentenced this month. Co-defendant David F. Bushdiecker,47, was sentenced on Jan. 24, 2019, to 20 years and five months in federal prison without parole. Co-defendant Benjamin H. McDaniel, also known as "Cowboy," 56, was sentenced on Jan. 4, 2019, to 14 years in federal prison without parole. Additionally, nine co-defendants in this case have been sentenced and three more have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

On Feb. 9, 2018, Contreras pleaded guilty to participating in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. Contreras admitted that she sold more than 40 kilograms of methamphetamine to McDaniel from 2014 to April 2015. McDaniel then distributed methamphetamine to others.

Contreras also admitted that she sold methamphetamine to co-defendant Troy C. Hudson, 50, of Belton, Mo. Hudson delivered drugs to Contreras and collected the proceeds of drug trafficking. Hudson also transported a large amount of cash (the proceeds of drug trafficking) to Arizona. Hudson was sentenced on Nov. 16, 2018, to eight years and two months in federal prison without parole.

Contreras also received methamphetamine from Roberto W. Duran, also known as "Muchacho," 37, a citizen of El Salvador who resided in Phoenix, Ariz. He delivered approximately 10 pounds of methamphetamine at a time to Contreras's residence or to a garage behind a pizza restaurant in Raytown, Mo. The methamphetamine was hidden in various vehicles and removed once it arrived. Contreras paid the drivers for methamphetamine they had previously delivered, and those proceeds were then transported back to Arizona. Duran was sentenced on June 28, 2018, to 14 years and seven months in federal prison without parole.

Contreras was allowed to use the Raytown garage by the garage's renter, co-defendant Aaron R. Plowman, 41, of Eldon, Mo. On four occasions, Plowman permitted Contreras to use the garage to receive methamphetamine shipments from her Arizona supplier. In exchange for the use of the garage space, Contreras fronted about one pound of methamphetamine to Plowman on each occasion. Plowman was sentenced on July 30, 2018, to 10 years and eight months in federal prison without parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Alison D. Dunning. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department; the Jackson County Drug Task Force; the Drug Enforcement Administration; Immigration and Custom Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI); the Independence, Mo., Police Department; the Lee's Summit, Mo., Police Department; and the Raytown, Mo., Police Department.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, February 4, 2019

### Three Cameron Residents Among Five Pleading Guilty to Meth Conspiracy

#### Three Defendants Face 18 Years in Prison

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Three Cameron, Mo., residents are among five defendants who have pleaded guilty to their roles in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Benjamin W. Clark, 26, of Cameron, pleaded guilty today before U.S. Chief Magistrate Judge Matt J. Whitworth to the charge contained in a Nov. 16, 2017, federal indictment.

Clark is the fifth defendant to plead guilty to participating in the drug-trafficking conspiracy. Codefendant Jalie J. Brinlee, 28, of Cameron, pleaded guilty on Jan. 4, 2019. Co-defendants Felicia C. Ward, 23, of Cameron; Robert J. Keegan, 26, of Harrisonville, Mo.; and Frank E. Hundley, 34, of Kansas City, Mo.; pleaded guilty on Dec. 28, 2018. Brinlee and Keegan also pleaded guilty to possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime.

All five of the co-defendants admitted they participated in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine from January to May 24, 2017. Clark and Brinlee purchased methamphetamine from various suppliers and distributed it to customers in Cameron, Kansas City and elsewhere.

On May 12, 2017, Keegan was stopped by law enforcement and was found in possession of a Hi-point .40-caliber handgun and a duffel bag containing approximately 3.8 kilograms of methamphetamine.

On May 24, 2017, a trooper with the Missouri State Highway Patrol stopped Ward, who was carrying a Glock 9mm handgun in her purse. Ward had retrieved the handgun from the vehicle where Clark and Brinlee were located, and Brinlee admitted to possessing the firearm prior to transferring it to Ward. Also found in Ward's purse was approximately one kilogram of methamphetamine, which Brinlee also admitted to possessing at the time of the traffic stop.

Under the terms of their plea agreements, Clark, Brinlee and Keegan each will be sentenced to 18 years in federal prison without parole. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

Under federal statutes, Ward and Hundley each are subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Edwards. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Belton, Mo., Police Department, the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 7, 2019

### St. Louis Man Sentenced to 14 Years for Meth, Illegal Firearm

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A St. Louis, Mo., man who was found passed out at an Oak Grove, Mo., truck stop after a week-long bender has been sentenced in federal court for illegally possessing methamphetamine and a firearm.

James P. Pettus, 40, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Brian C. Wimes on Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019, to 14 years and two months in federal prison without parole.

On Sept. 26, 2018, Pettus pleaded guilty to possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute and to possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime.

Pettus was contacted by an Oak Grove, Mo., police officer at Petro Truck Stop, 301 S.W. 1st Street, Oak Grove, on the morning of May 21, 2018. The officer was called because Pettus was passed out in a booth inside the Iron Skillet Restaurant. He was asleep and snoring, with his face and arms covered in saliva and snot. After many attempts to wake him, he would only advise that his name was James, and could not provide identification.

The officer called an ambulance for Pettus. While waiting for the ambulance, Pettus pulled a knife from his right rear pant pocket and flipped it open. The officer struggled briefly with Pettus to take away the knife and handcuff him. The officer then found a loaded High Point .45-caliber semi-automatic handgun in Pettus's front waistband. Officers also found approximately 40.9 grams of pure methamphetamine in Pettus's left front pocket.

Pettus later told detectives he had been on a methamphetamine-fueled bender for the past week.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph M. Marquez. It was investigated by the Oak Grove, Mo., Police Department, the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Friday, March 1, 2019

### **Independence Woman Sentenced for Leading Meth Conspiracy**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – An Independence, Mo., woman has been sentenced in federal court for her role in leading a conspiracy to distribute multiple kilograms of methamphetamine.

Melanie C. Hamilton, 46, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Brian C. Wimes on Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019, to eight years in federal prison without parole.

On Oct. 6, 2017, Hamilton pleaded guilty to being the source of supply for the drug-trafficking conspiracy that ran from Nov. 1, 2013, to Sept. 24, 2014. Hamilton admitted that she obtained large quantities of methamphetamine, which she broke down into smaller quantities for redistribution. The totality of the investigation indicates that Hamilton was involved in the distribution of at least five kilograms of methamphetamine.

A confidential informant made three separate controlled purchases from Hamilton; on each occasion she weighed out approximately 8.3 grams of methamphetamine from a large zip-lock freezer bag that contained multiple pounds of methamphetamine.

Law enforcement officers executed a search warrant at Hamilton's residence on Sept. 24, 2014, and seized more than a kilogram of methamphetamine, a DVR containing video surveillance of individuals coming and going from her residence, and drug paraphernalia. Hamilton told investigators that she had received one to two pounds of methamphetamine from her source every other week over the past three months (1.5 pounds per two weeks, or three pounds per month, totals nine pounds, or 4,086 grams).

Hamilton is the final defendant to be sentenced among 10 defendants who have pleaded guilty and been sentenced in this case.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Edwards. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Independence, Mo., Police Department.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday, April 10, 2019

### Indictment: Two Mexican Citizens Sold Heroin, Meth, Guns at KCK Residence

**KANSAS CITY, KAN.** – Two Mexican citizens living in Kansas City, Kan., were indicted today on charges of selling heroin, methamphetamine and guns from their home, U.S. Attorney Stephen McAllister.

**Pedro Daniel Torres-Caldera**, 36, a citizen of Mexico, and **Osmar Barraza-Caldera**, 21, a citizen of Mexico, were indicted in an 18-count indictment that included charges of drug trafficking conspiracy; distribution of heroin, methamphetamine and oxycodone; unlawful possession of firearms; and maintaining a premises in furtherance of drug trafficking.

According to court documents, investigators made a series of undercover purchases from the defendants in transactions that took place at the defendants' residence in Kansas City, Kan. On Feb. 1, 2019, for instance, an undercover officer paid the defendants \$2,500 for an Anderson Manufacturing AM-15 rifle with a Spikes Tactical Launcher and a Trijicon ACOG Optic.

On March 13, 2019, investigators served a search warrant at the Locust address. They seized more than three pounds of black tar heroin and firearms.

Upon conviction, the crimes carry the following penalties:

Conspiracy: Not less than 10 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$10 million.

Distribution of heroin: Not more than 20 years and a fine up to \$1 million.

Distribution of more than 5 grams of methamphetamine: Not less than five years and not more than 40 years and a fine up to \$5 million.

Distribution of oxycodone: Up to 20 years and a fine up to \$1 million.

Possession of an unregistered firearm: Up to 10 years and a fine up to \$250,000.

Alien in possession of a firearm: Up to 10 years and a fine up to \$250,000.

Distribution of more than 50 grams of methamphetamine: Not less than 10 years and a fine up to \$10 million.

Unlawful possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking: Not less than five years and a fine up to \$250,000.

Maintaining premises in furtherance of drug trafficking: Up to 20 years and a fine up to \$500,000.

The FBI and the Jackson County Drug Task Force investigated. Assistant U.S. Attorney Trent Krug and Assistant U.S. Attorney David Zabel are prosecuting.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday, April 24, 2019

### Harrisonville Man Sentenced to 18 Years for Meth Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Harrisonville, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Robert J. Keegan, 27, was sentenced by U.S. Chief District Judge Beth Phillips to 18 years in federal prison without parole.

On Dec. 28, 2018, Keegan pleaded guilty to participating in a drug-trafficking conspiracy and to possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. Keegan is among five defendants who have pleaded guilty in this case. Co-defendants Benjamin W. Clark, 27, Jalie J. Brinlee, 29, and Felicia C. Ward, 23, all of Cameron; and Frank E. Hundley, 34, of Kansas City, Mo.; have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

All five of the defendants admitted they participated in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine from January to May 24, 2017. Clark and Brinlee purchased methamphetamine from various suppliers and distributed it to customers in Cameron, Kansas City and elsewhere.

On May 12, 2017, Keegan was stopped by law enforcement and was found in possession of a Hi-point .40-caliber handgun and a duffel bag containing approximately 3.8 kilograms of methamphetamine.

On May 24, 2017, a trooper with the Missouri State Highway Patrol stopped Ward, who was carrying a Glock 9mm handgun in her purse. Ward had retrieved the handgun from the vehicle where Clark and Brinlee were located, and Brinlee admitted to possessing the firearm prior to transferring it to Ward. Also found in Ward's purse was approximately one kilogram of methamphetamine, which Brinlee also admitted to possessing at the time of the traffic stop.

Under the terms of their plea agreements, subject to acceptance by the court, Clark and Brinlee each will be sentenced to 18 years in federal prison without parole. Under federal statutes, Ward and

Hundley each are subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to a sentence of life in federal prison without parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Edwards. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Belton, Mo., Police Department, the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday, April 30, 2019

### **Cameron Woman Sentenced to 18 Years for Meth Conspiracy**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Cameron, Mo., woman has been sentenced in federal court for her role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Jalie J. Brinlee, 29, was sentenced by U.S. Chief District Judge Beth Phillips on Monday, April 29, to 18 years in federal prison without parole.

On Jan. 4, 2019, Brinlee pleaded guilty to participating in a drug-trafficking conspiracy and to possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. Brinlee is among five defendants who have pleaded guilty in this case. Co-defendant Robert J. Keegan, 27, of Harrisonville, Mo., was sentenced on Wednesday, April 24, to 18 years in federal prison without parole. Co-defendants Benjamin W. Clark, 27, and Felicia C. Ward, 23, both of Cameron, and Frank E. Hundley, 34, of Kansas City, Mo.; have pleaded guilty and await sentencing.

All five of the defendants admitted they participated in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine from January to May 24, 2017. Clark and Brinlee purchased methamphetamine from various suppliers and distributed it to customers in Cameron, Kansas City and elsewhere.

On May 12, 2017, Keegan was stopped by law enforcement and was found in possession of a Hi-point .40-caliber handgun and a duffel bag containing approximately 3.8 kilograms of methamphetamine.

On May 24, 2017, a trooper with the Missouri State Highway Patrol stopped Ward, who was carrying a Glock 9mm handgun in her purse. Ward had retrieved the handgun from the vehicle where Clark and Brinlee were located, and Brinlee admitted to possessing the firearm prior to transferring it to Ward. Also found in Ward's purse was approximately one kilogram of methamphetamine, which Brinlee also admitted to possessing at the time of the traffic stop.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Edwards. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Belton, Mo., Police Department, the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Thursday, June 20, 2019

### Leader, Enforcer Sentenced for Conspiracy to Distribute 45 Kilos of Meth

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The leader and the enforcer of a drug-trafficking organization that distributed more than 45 kilograms of methamphetamine in the Kansas City metropolitan area were sentenced in federal court today.

Jennifer Gladman-Carnall, 37, of Kansas City, Missouri, and Michael Keavney, 42, of Kearney, Missouri, were sentenced in separate appearances before U.S. District Judge Roseann Ketchmark. Gladman-Carnall was sentenced to 11 years and six months in federal prison without parole. Keavney was sentenced to 15 years and eight months in federal prison without parole. They are among 11 defendants who have been convicted in this case.

Gladman-Carnall pleaded guilty on May 4, 2018, to being the leader of the drug-trafficking conspiracy, which she admitted distributed more than 45 kilograms of methamphetamine. She also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery (of a methamphetamine dealer) and to aiding and abetting the use and brandishing of a firearm during that robbery.

Keavney pleaded guilty on Sept. 13, 2018, to his role in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. According to court documents, Keavney played the role of an "enforcer" in this conspiracy. Keavney provided security for co-defendants, and was himself involved in distributing 2.4 kilograms of methamphetamine. He also arranged deals, delivered narcotics, collected money, and arranged the illegal sale of firearms. Keavney was a principle actor in the conspiracy as he was directly connected with several large scale drug dealers, was regularly armed with firearms, and sold firearms.

After being indicted and released on pretrial supervision, according to court documents, Keavney violated his supervisions several times for using drugs, absconding, and committing new law violations. On April 19, 2017, Keavney was driving a stolen motorcycle at excessive speeds. When law enforcement attempted to stop him, he crashed the motorcycle and fled on foot. After ultimately being detained, Keavney was highly intoxicated and in possession of a knife and brass knuckles. Toxicology reports indicated that he had opiates, methamphetamine, marijuana, and alcohol in his system. After being discharged from the hospital, Keavney absconded from supervision for nearly

four months before he was arrested. On Aug. 15, 2017, Keavney's pretrial bond was revoked and he was remanded to custody.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David Raskin and Matthew Moeder. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Thursday, June 20, 2019

### Mexican Nationals Sentenced for Conspiracy to Distribute Multi-Kilos of Heroin

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Two Mexican nationals have been sentenced in federal court for their roles in a conspiracy that distributed more than 14 kilograms of heroin in the Kansas City, Missouri, metropolitan area, some of which is believed to have resulted in overdoses and deaths.

Julian Felix-Aguirre, 46, and Martin Missael Puerta-Navarro, 38, were sentenced in separate hearings before U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner on Wednesday, June 19. Felix-Aguirre was sentenced to 24 years and seven months in federal prison without parole. Pueta-Navarro was sentenced to 14 years and eight months in federal prison without parole.

On Sept. 26, 2018, Felix-Aguirre pleaded guilty to participating in a conspiracy to distribute heroin and methamphetamine, to participating in a money-laundering conspiracy, and to possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. Puerta-Navarro pleaded guilty on May 22, 2018, to participating in a conspiracy to distribute heroin and to participating in a money-laundering conspiracy.

Felix-Aguirre was arrested during a traffic stop on Sept. 14, 2016, because he did not have a valid driver's license. When officers searched his vehicle they found a package that contained approximately 16 ounces of black tar heroin.

Law enforcement officers then executed search warrants at two residences, where they found firearms and ammunition, bulk currency, multiple ledgers, various drug packaging, packaged methamphetamine and heroin, and money transfer receipts.

Felix-Aguirre and Puerta-Navarro are among 26 defendants charged in this case, among whom 16 now have been sentenced.

According to court documents, co-defendant Dennis McLallen, 66, of Overland Park, was in direct contact with Mexico-based heroin and methamphetamine suppliers who worked through Kansas City-based associates, including Felix-Aguirre and Puerta-Navarro. Defendants in the case worked with the Sinaloa cartel in Mexico to establish stash houses, build hidden compartments in load vehicles, receive black tar heroin, sell it to Kansas City-area customers for cash, and deposit or

transfer the illicit funds in bank accounts or through wire transfer businesses. McLallen received multi-ounce levels of black tar heroin from his suppliers, which he and other conspirators repackaged into ounce and gram levels for distribution.

McLallen was sentenced on April 18, 2018, to 15 years in federal prison without parole after pleading guilty to his role in the drug-trafficking conspiracy. He admitted that he was responsible for the distribution of more than 10 kilograms of heroin. Conspirators distributed at least 500 ounces (more than 14 kilograms) of heroin, with an average sale price of \$1,700 per ounce, for a total of \$850,000.

In September 2016, searches were conducted on vehicles and at residences associated with subjects of the investigation, which yielded heroin, methamphetamine, prescription drugs, more than \$200,000 in cash, a load vehicle with hidden compartments, drug ledgers, drug packaging, drug scales, firearms, ammunition, a bullet proof vest, and various other drug trafficking-related items.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Sean T. Foley. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

#### U.S. Attorneys » Western District of Missouri » News

### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, June 24, 2019

### **Cameron Man Sentenced to 18 Years for Meth Conspiracy**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Cameron, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Benjamin W. Clark, 27, was sentenced by U.S. Chief District Judge Beth Phillips to 18 years in federal prison without parole.

On Feb. 4, 2019, Clark pleaded guilty to participating in a drug-trafficking conspiracy. Co-defendants Jalie J. Brinlee, 29, of Cameron, and Robert J. Keegan, 37, of Harrisonville, Missouri, each have also been sentenced to 18 years in federal prison without parole.

Clark, Brinlee, and Keegan each admitted they participated in a conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine from January to May 24, 2017. Clark and Brinlee purchased methamphetamine from various suppliers and distributed it to customers in Cameron, Kansas City and elsewhere.

On May 12, 2017, Keegan was stopped by law enforcement and was found in possession of a Hi-point .40-caliber handgun and a duffel bag containing approximately 3.8 kilograms of methamphetamine.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Edwards. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Belton, Mo., Police Department, the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

#### U.S. Attorneys » Western District of Missouri » News

### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Thursday, June 27, 2019

### Mexican National Sentenced to 30 Years for Meth Trafficking, Illegally Reentering the U.S.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Mexican national was sentenced in federal court today for attempting to sell about 15 pounds of methamphetamine to an undercover law enforcement officer after illegally reentering the United States.

Javier Corona-Verduzco, 36, of Montclair, Calif., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Stephen R. Bough to 30 years in federal prison without parole. The court also sentenced Corona-Verduzco to 20 years of supervised release following incarceration.

On Jan. 15, 2019, Corona-Verduzco was convicted at trial of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute and of illegally reentering the United States after being deported following his incarceration for two earlier drug trafficking convictions. Corona-Verduzco was still on supervised release for those earlier convictions when he was arrested in this case.

Following his conviction, incarceration, and deportation to Mexico, Corona-Verduzco illegally reentered the United States and was again actively engaged in trafficking large quantities of methamphetamine.

Corona-Verduzco attempted to sell pound quantities of methamphetamine to a confidential informant. Corona-Verduzco told the confidential informant that he had a large quantity of methamphetamine and was looking for customers to purchase multiple pound quantities.

The confidential informant told Corona-Verduzco that he/she knew someone who was interested in purchasing pounds of methamphetamine. Corona-Verduzco agreed to meet the confidential informant and this acquaintance, who was actually an undercover law enforcement officer, on March 31, 2016. Corona-Verduzco met with the confidential informant and the undercover officer at a

location in Kansas City, Kansas, and offered to sell 15 pounds of methamphetamine for approximately \$80,000.

Corona-Verduzco and the confidential informant drove to a house in Kansas City, Mo., so that the confidential informant could check the quality of the methamphetamine for sale. At that location, the confidential informant saw approximately 2.5 pounds of methamphetamine in a bag.

Corona-Verduzco was arrested the next day. He had told both the confidential informant and the undercover officer that the 15 pounds of methamphetamine he was attempting to sell them was in a gray Chevrolet Tahoe. Law enforcement officers located the Tahoe parked behind the Kansas City, Mo., residence where Corona-Verduzco had taken the confidential informant the day before. Law enforcement officers found seven packages of methamphetamine, totaling 6.814 kilograms (approximately 15 pounds), hidden in a hollow compartment behind the driver's side rear panel. Officers also found 400 grams of methamphetamine inside the residence.

Corona-Verduzco also has a prior conviction in an unrelated case for witness intimidation where he threatened the lives and families of co-defendants.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Q. McCarther and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Sean T. Foley. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, the Blue Springs, Mo., Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

#### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday, October 8, 2019

### **Independence Woman Sentenced for Meth Conspiracy**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – An Independence, Missouri, woman was sentenced in federal court today for her role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Sarah M. Davila, 34, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Greg Kays to 12 years and one month in federal prison without parole.

Davila, who pleaded guilty on Jan. 3, 2018, admitted that she sold methamphetamine to an undercover police officer on five separate occasions. According to court documents, those purchases were large amounts and totaled 245.88 grams of methamphetamine. When officers executed a search warrant at her residence, they seized a firearm and some methamphetamine.

Davila, identified as a mid-level supplier, is the final defendant to be sentenced among 10 defendants convicted of their roles in the drug-trafficking conspiracy.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph M. Marquez. It was investigated by the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Drug Enforcement Administration

#### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Friday, August 30, 2019

### KC Man Indicted for Illegal Firearms, Meth

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A Kansas City, Mo., man has been indicted by a federal grand jury for illegally possessing almost two kilograms of methamphetamine and four firearms.

Jonathan D. Beaton, 41, was charged in a three-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo., on Thursday, Aug. 29. The indictment replaces a federal criminal complaint filed against Beaton on Aug. 8, 2019.

Today's indictment charges Beaton with one count of being a felon in possession of firearms, one count of possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute, and one count of possessing firearms in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the original criminal complaint, Beaton was stopped by law enforcement officers this summer.

On Aug. 7, 2019, detectives with the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Independence Police Department conducted surveillance of Beaton as he visited the residence of a known methamphetamine trafficker. Detectives followed Beaton (who had an active warrant for his arrest) from the residence and stopped his vehicle. When Beaton got out of the vehicle, an officer saw several large plastic bags on the driver's seat that contained methamphetamine, and placed Beaton under arrest.

An officer searched Beaton and found 11 grams of methamphetamine in his pocket. An officer searched Beaton's vehicle and found four gallon-sized clear plastic bags, which contained a total of nearly 1.8 kilograms of methamphetamine, and \$1,228. The officer also found four firearms in the vehicle – two Kimber .45-caliber pistols, a Sig Sauer 9mm pistol, and a loaded Smith & Wesson .40-caliber pistol.

Under federal law, it is illegal for anyone who has been convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. Beaton has three prior felony convictions for possession of a controlled substance, and prior felony convictions for being a felon in possession of a firearm, tampering, burglary, and escape.

The charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Emily A. Morgan. It was investigated by the Blue Springs, Mo., Police Department, the Independence, Mo., Police Department, and the Jackson County Drug Task Force.

#### **Project Safe Neighborhoods**

The U.S. Attorney's Office is partnering with federal, state, and local law enforcement to specifically identify criminals responsible for significant violent crime in the Western District of Missouri. A centerpiece of this effort is Project Safe Neighborhoods, a program that brings together all levels of law enforcement to reduce violent crime and make neighborhoods safer for everyone. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an evidence-based program that identifies the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develops comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, Project Safe Neighborhoods focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

#### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, October 28, 2019

### 14 Defendants Charged, 200 Pounds of Meth Seized

**WICHITA**, **KAN.** – A prosecutor said in court today that federal agents seized more than 220 pounds of methamphetamine in a drug trafficking case in the Kansas City, Kan., metro area.

U.S. Attorney Stephen McAllister said 14 defendants are charged in the case.

"Opioids are often in the news," McAllister said. "But methamphetamine remains our biggest drug problem in the Midwest."

Investigators found the methamphetamine when they served a search warrant at a house in Kansas City, Kan., where one of the defendants lives.

The 33-count indictment, which was based on more than a year of investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, contains charges including conspiracy, distribution, possession with intent to distribute and interstate communications in furtherance of drug trafficking. Many of the charges carry potential penalties of 10 years or more in federal prison

The following defendants have been charged:

**Luis Martinez-Carrango**, 57, Kansas City, Mo., conspiracy, interstate communications in furtherance of drug trafficking, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

**Alfredo Rey**, 34, Kansas City, Kan., conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

**Antonio Edder Calderson-Reyes**, 31, conspiracy, distribution of methamphetamine, interstate communication in furtherance of drug trafficking.

Raul Gutierrez-Zamaripa, 31, conspiracy.

**Jose Rosa-Pacheco**, 34, Kansas City, Kan., conspiracy, distribution of methamphetamine, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

Carlos Rosa-Artia, 35: Kansas City, Kan., conspiracy.

**Enrique Rodriguez**, 42, conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

**Rusbein Galicia-Lopez**, 31, conspiracy, distribution of methamphetamine, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, interstate communication in furtherance of drug trafficking.

**Abraham Gutierrez-Ojeda**, 36, conspiracy, distributing methamphetamine, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, interstate communication in furtherance of drug trafficking,

**Jerry Taylor**, 44, conspiracy, interstate communication in furtherance of drug trafficking, distributing methamphetamine.

Yader Arita, 30, conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

Manuel Leyva-Quijada, 43, Kansas City, Kan., conspiracy.

**Mary Cain**, 38, Kansas City, Kan., conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

**Christopher Hite**, 36, conspiracy, possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

If convicted, the defendants could face the following penalties:

Conspiracy: Not less than 10 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$10 million.

Distribution: Not less than 10 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$10 million.

Possession with intent to distribute: Not less than 10 years in federal prison and a fine up to \$10 million.

Interstate communication: Not more than four years in federal prison and a fine up to \$250,000.

The Drug Enforcement Administration and the Kansas City Metro Strike Force investigated. Assistant U.S. Attorney David Lind is prosecuting.

In all cases, defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The indictments merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.

#### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, October 7, 2019

## Twenty Defendants Indicted in Drug-Trafficking Conspiracy Law Enforcement Operation Seizes Firearms, Heroin, Large Amounts of Cash

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Twenty defendants, primarily residents of Kansas City, Missouri, have been indicted for their roles in a drug-trafficking conspiracy. Most of the defendants were arrested during a law enforcement operation last week that resulted in seizures of firearms, heroin and other illegal drugs, and large amounts of cash.

Ladele D. Smith, also known as "Dellio" and "Dog," 32, Roy O. Franklin Jr., 29, David J. Duncan IV, also known as "Deei" or "DJ," 30, Terrance R. Garner, also known as "T-Dot," 34, Joshua D. Marchbanks, 29, Cory Tremaine Brown, also known as "Twin," 39, Carleeon D. Lockett, also known as "Tone," 27, Gary Othniel Toombs, 39, Errick Eugene Martin Jr., also known as "Dough Boy," 28, Kenneth Dewayne Scott, also known as "Kenny," 23, Cordell D. Edwards, also known as "Duke," 31, Victor Gonzalez, also known as "Lil Vic" and "El Chavo," 30, Michael E. Sims, also known as "Mikey," 33, Cordarrel Lamonte Scott, also known as "DOB," 33, Marco Rashon Maddox, 35, and Herman Graham Bell Jr., 64, all of Kansas City, Mo.; Cornelius Phelps, also known as "Tim Tim," 33, of Lee's Summit, Mo.; Sirrico L. Franklin, also known as "Chico" and "Rico," 28, of Raytown, Mo.; Lencorya Tiko Montrel Grady, also known as "Thick," 44, of Springfield, Mo.; and Martin Christopher Garner, also known as "Looch" and "Lu Lu," 32, of St. Louis, Mo., were charged in a two-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Mo., on Tuesday, Oct. 1.

The federal indictment was unsealed following a law enforcement operation on Wednesday, Oct. 2, in which 16 of the 20 defendants were arrested. Approximately 200 federal agents and local law enforcement officers were involved in the operation, which also resulted in the arrests of two additional individuals who have been charged with being felons in possession of firearms in separate cases related to the underlying investigation of this case.

According to court documents, investigators seized 23 firearms, approximately 350 grams of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, \$75,000 in cash, scales, an apparent drug ledger, and drug packaging materials during the course of the arrest operation and accompanying search warrants. Smith, Duncan,

Martin, Garner, Gonzalez, Scott, Phelps, and Bell were arrested with firearms either on their person, in their vehicle, or in their residence.

The indictment alleges that all 20 of the defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute at least a kilogram of heroin, as well as cocaine, crack cocaine, oxycodone, codeine, and marijuana, from Jan. 1, 2011, to Oct. 1, 2019.

In addition to the drug-trafficking conspiracy, Smith, Roy Franklin, Sirrico Franklin, and Toombs are charged with maintaining a residence for the purpose of manufacturing, distributing, and using controlled substances.

Officers executed a search warrant at a residence maintained by Smith, Roy Franklin, Sirrico Franklin, and Toombs during the Oct. 2 operation and seized approximately 350 grams of suspected heroin, a digital scale, packaging material, two Glock handguns, two Mico Draco AK-47 pistols, a Century Arms AK-47 pistol, and an apparent bullet proof vest. According to court documents, officers also found a stolen Jeep, riddled with bullet holes and missing the back window, that allegedly had been used by conspirators in a shoot-out on Sept. 9, 2019, in the area of 35th Street and Woodland. Investigators also recovered live ammunition and shell casings inside the vehicle.

Duncan was among those arrested in his apartment during the Oct. 2 operation. According to court documents, officers located three firearms under his mattress: a Zastava M92PV, a Glock Model 19, and a Norinco MAK90 AK-47. Investigators also seized approximately \$7,100 in cash, an apparent drug ledger on the nightstand listing nicknames and dollar amounts, and Duncan's Dodge Charger.

The charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Adam Caine, Ashleigh Ragner, and Stacey Perkins Rock. It was investigated by the FBI, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, and IRS-Criminal Investigation, with support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Kansas City, Kansas, Police Department, the Lee's Summit, Mo., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, and the Independence, Mo., Police Department.

#### **OCDETF**

This case is part of the Department of Justice's Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program. The OCDETF program is the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's drug supply reduction strategy. OCDETF was established in 1982 to conduct comprehensive, multilevel attacks on major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations. Today, OCDETF combines the resources and expertise of its member federal agencies in cooperation with state and local law enforcement. The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle

the most serious drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and those primarily responsible for the nation's illicit drug supply.

#### **Justice News**

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Western District of Missouri

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday, November 20, 2019

# Mother, Son, Daughter Plead Guilty to \$5.4 Million Meth Conspiracy

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – A mother, her son, and her daughter are among four defendants who pleaded guilty in federal court today to their roles in a \$5.4 million conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Linda Kay Ballard, 67, her son, Eric Edward Ballard, 27, both of Atchison, Kansas; her daughter, Charlsie Kim Harris, 35, of Garden City, Missouri, and Anthony Dewayne Fifer, 48, of Mexico, Missouri, pleaded guilty in separate appearances before U.S. District Judge Brian C. Wimes to their roles in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine from Jan. 1, 2015, to Nov. 16, 2017. Each of the defendants also pleaded guilty to participating in a money-laundering conspiracy. Linda Ballard and Harris were taken into custody immediately after today's hearing; Eric Ballard and Fifer have been in federal custody since their arrests.

They are among nine defendants who have pleaded guilty in this case. Michaela Joeanne Hernandez, 38, of Raymore, Missouri; Brandy Michael Morgan, 45, of Kansas City, Missouri; Brian Joe Russell, 38, of Amazonia, Missouri; Sharmyn Leanne Shryock, 29, and Jeffery Allen Jennings, 33, both of St. Joseph, Missouri; have also pleaded guilty.

According to today's plea agreements, Linda and Eric Ballard and Harris received methamphetamine from Hernandez to distribute. They received ounce quantities of methamphetamine multiple times a week. Linda Ballard also admitted she received methamphetamine from Fifer to distribute.

Fifer, who also received methamphetamine from Hernandez, admitted that he normally received ounces but on a couple of occasions, he took quarter-pound quantities of methamphetamine to St. Joseph and delivered it to Jennings.

Investigators identified Hernandez as the main distributor in the organization, coordinating large distributions of methamphetamine from the Kansas City area to the St. Joseph and Atchison areas, where it was divided and distributed by the remaining defendants. Law enforcement officers seized approximately three pounds of methamphetamine and two handguns when they executed a search

warrant at her residence. Hernandez admitted that she was typically in possession of at least pound quantities of methamphetamine, and that she had been involved in selling over 50 kilograms of methamphetamine per month in the past year.

Linda Ballard agreed the government's evidence of her total drug responsibility is more than five kilograms of methamphetamine, which she is responsible for distributing or possessing with the intent to distribute.

Eric Ballard, Harris, and Fifer each agreed the government's evidence of their total drug responsibility is more than 1.5 kilograms of methamphetamine apiece, which they are each responsible for distributing or possessing with the intent to distribute.

Under the terms of today's plea agreement, the four co-defendants must pay a money judgment in an amount based upon their drug responsibility (as determined by the court) and the drug value calculations contained within the indictment, not to exceed \$5.4 million.

Under federal statutes, Linda and Eric Ballard, Harris, and Fifer are each subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in federal prison without parole, up to a sentence of 60 years in federal prison without parole. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. Sentencing hearings will be scheduled after the completion of presentence investigations by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Plattsburg, Mo., Police Department; the Atchison County, Kan., Sheriff's Department; the Buchanan County Drug Strike Force and Sheriff's Department; the Jackson County Drug Task Force; the Clinton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; the Missouri State Highway Patrol; the Cass County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; and the Clay County Drug Task Force.

#### U.S. Attorneys » Western District of Missouri » News

#### **Justice News**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Wednesday, December 11, 2019

U.S. Attorneys Say Strike Force Targets Drugs, Violence in Kansas City Metro



U.S. Attorney Tim Garrison (left) announced the new KC Metro Strike Force to target drug traffickers and violent criminals on both sides of the state line. Garrison was joined by U.S. Attorney Stephen McAllister (District of Kansas, center), Adam Cohen, director of the Executive Office of the

Organized Crime Drug EnforcementTask Forces (right), and law enforcement partners from 13 agencies.

KANSAS CITY – A new Kansas City Metro OCDETF Strike Force is targeting drug traffickers and violent criminals on both sides of the state line, U.S. Attorney Stephen McAllister in Kansas and U.S. Attorney Tim Garrison in the Western District of Missouri announced today.

McAllister and Garrison held a joint press conference to announce that local, state, and federal law enforcement officers are working together on Strike Force cases.

"The Strike Force already is conducting investigations and filing charges against the criminals who are poisoning our community with drugs and violence," McAllister said. "Crime does not stop at the state line and neither does the Strike Force."

"This new Strike Force presents a united front against drug trafficking and violent crime throughout the metropolitan area," Garrison said. "We are marshaling agents and officers from both Missouri and Kansas under the same roof and equipping them with additional investigative resources to better protect our community from the violent scourge of drug trafficking."

The Strike Force, which launched in April 2019, is targeting drug trafficking organizations that are making the streets of metro Kansas City less safe and more violent by importing large quantities of methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl, and other drugs from Mexico and elsewhere.

#### JOINS OCDETF STRIKE FORCES NATIONWIDE

The Justice Department's Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) oversees the Strike Force initiative. Kansas City joins OCDETF Strike Forces in major cities including Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, North Texas, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Diego, San Juan, Southeast Michigan, and Tampa.

The OCDETF Strike Force in metro Kansas City includes members from the FBI, DEA, and ATF, as well as the police departments in Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the U.S. Marshals Service, Homeland Security Investigations, the Internal Revenue Service, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Federal prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Offices in Kansas and the Western District of Missouri will prosecute the Strike Force's cases in federal court.

#### MISSION: DISRUPT, DISMANTLE CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

The goal of the Strike Force is to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations, including gangs, cartels, and others that are trafficking in drugs and firearms, or engaging in money laundering.

Participating agencies have agreed to assign full-time personnel to the Strike Force. Police officers, federal agents, and prosecutors are working together under one roof. For security reasons, the location will not be made public.

An FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge manages the Strike Force's three teams: a major crime squad, a major threat squad, and a fugitive squad. A Strike Force Executive Council, whose members include both U.S. Attorneys, will oversee the Strike Force.

#### **CASES FILED**

As an example of the work of the Kansas City Metro OCDETF Strike Force, an investigation across state lines resulted in separate indictments being brought in both Kansas and Missouri last month.

In Kansas City, Kansas, the Strike Force investigated a case (U.S. v. Jose Manuel Delgado-Hernandez, et al.) that resulted in federal drug conspiracy charges against six men who are accused of distributing methamphetamine, heroin, and fentanyl that came to Kansas through a pipeline that begins in Mexico.

The indictment alleges the organization's distributors at the street level were operating within 1,000 feet of Kensington Park playground and Wyandotte High School.

During the investigation, law enforcement seized 19 pounds of methamphetamine, 66 pounds of marijuana, and firearms, including handguns and a military style rifle.

In Kansas City, Missouri, the parallel Strike Force investigation resulted in a case (U.S. v. Christie D. Holloway, et al) that included federal drug conspiracy charges against four defendants who are accused of conspiring to distribute methamphetamine. One of the defendants is accused of illegally possessing a firearm

Other Strike Force cases include:

- v U.S. v. Luis Martinez-Carrango, et al.: Agents seized more than 220 pounds of methamphetamine when they served a search warrant at a house in Kansas City, Kansas. Fourteen defendants were charged in a 33-count grand jury indictment. During the investigation, the agents also seized approximately 140 gallons of liquid methamphetamine being transported from Douglas County, Kansas, to Lees Summit, Missouri.
- v US v. Lionel Simpson: In November, Simpson was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to selling crack cocaine to undercover agents during meetings in grocery store parking lots and gas stations in Kansas City, Kansas. He was arrested with a backpack containing gloves, a mask, a gun, and a 50-round magazine. He said he kept it in case he ever ran into a rival gang member who was responsible for the death of his sister.
- v U.S. v. Jovanny Medina, et al.: Medina was indicted Oct. 23, 2019. The indictment alleges he was arrested during the unloading of 35 pounds of methamphetamine from a car hauler truck in the

parking lot of a Dollar General in Kansas City, Kansas.

v U.S. v. Ladele D. Smith, et al.: Twenty defendants were indicted for their roles in a drug-trafficking conspiracy. Approximately 200 federal agents and local law enforcement officers were involved in an Oct. 2, 2019, operation in which most of the defendants were arrested. During the operation, officers seized 23 firearms, heroin and other illegal drugs, and \$75,000 in cash. The indictment alleges the defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute at least a kilogram of heroin, as well as cocaine, crack cocaine, oxycodone, codeine, and marijuana.

The charges contained in these indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

#### STATEMENTS FROM PARTNERS

Agency officials who are working with the Strike Force made the following statements:

- v Timothy Langan, FBI Special Agent Charge, Kansas City Division: "The creation of the KC Metro OCDETF Strike Force provides a collaborative effort, serving as a force multiplier to effectively protect the public, by targeting the command structure of major international and interstate drug organizations. We have already seen success with the establishment of this task force locally, through the recent indictment and arrest of multiple subjects in an ongoing drug conspiracy investigation in the Western District of Missouri. That investigation, as well as future investigations, will aim at dismantling, disrupting and prosecuting the hierarchy of these organizations through a concerted effort of federal, state and local law enforcement."
- v Erik Smith, DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge: "The DEA Kansas City District Office is pleased to collaborate with our federal, state, and local partners in this Strike Force endeavor. The prevalence of drugs and violence is a threat to this community, and a concerted focus on addressing these threats is required from all federal, state, and local law enforcement. We are committed to doing our part."
- v Marino Vidoli, ATF Special Agent in Charge: "ATF's unique expertise in using crime gun intelligence to identify those involved in gun crime and our experience in investigating how firearms are acquired by violent criminals in our communities, allows us to be an integral part of the Strike Force efforts to find, and hold accountable those responsible for violent crime. The Strike Force strengthens ATF's long standing tradition of partnering with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to reduce violence and make our communities safer."
- v Richard Smith, Chief of the Kansas City, Missouri, Police Department: "Drugs and violence have no boundaries in Kansas City or the metropolitan area. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Strike Force to combat violence and provide a safer community for all. Working together provides additional tools and resources to identify violent offenders and remove them from our streets."
- v Michael York, Chief of the Kansas City, Kansas, Police Department: "The Kansas City, Kansas, Police Department is looking forward to working with our federal partners and local agencies with

the hopes of reducing violent crime not just in our city but the entire metropolitan area. The new Metro Strike Force will be a force multiplier for agencies that are dealing with violent crime such as homicides and drive by shootings. We have already experienced success in the short time that Strike Force has been operational."

- v Ron Miller, U.S. Marshal of the District of Kansas, and Mark James, U.S. Marshal of the Western District of Missouri: "The U.S. Marshals Service looks forward to combining its fugitive targeting expertise with the overall significant drug and violent crime investigations pursued by the KC Metro OCDETF Strike Force. Together, we are a stronger force against criminal organizations impacting the Greater Kansas City area."
- v Paul Shade, U.S. Postal Inspection Service: "Our agency will assist in any matters that involve criminal activity while using the USPS to further their crimes. This includes but is not limited to the trafficking of narcotics and narcotics related U.S. currency being shipped through the mail."
- v Karl Stiften, IRS-Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge: "IRS-Criminal Investigation (CI) is a proud participant of the KC Metro OCDETF Strike Force. CI special agents contribute our financial investigative skills to track and seize proceeds of illegal activities from the criminals involved. Pooling the skills and resources of each agency makes a formidable team."

The prosecutions announced in this release were brought as a part of the Department of Justice's OCDETF Co-located Strike Forces Initiative, which provides for the establishment of permanent multi-agency task force teams that work side-by-side in the same location. This co-located model enables agents from different agencies to collaborate on intelligence-driven, multi-jurisdictional operations against a continuum of priority targets and their affiliate illicit financial networks. These prosecutor-led, co-located Strike Forces capitalize on the synergy created through the long-term relationships that can be forged by agents, analysts, and prosecutors who remain together over time, and they epitomize the model that has proven most effective in combating organized crime.

OCDETF was established in 1982 to conduct comprehensive, multilevel attacks on major drug trafficking and money laundering organizations and is the keystone of the Department of Justice's illicit drug reduction strategy. The principal mission of the OCDETF program is to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the most serious drug trafficking organizations, transnational criminal organizations, and money laundering organizations that present a significant threat to the public safety, economic, or national security of the United States.

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U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Missouri

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### Eleven Area Residents Indicted for \$1.7 Million Meth, Heroin Conspiracy, Numerous Firearms

## Officers Seized 77 Firearms, Large Amounts of Illegal Drugs During the Investigation

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Eleven defendants have been indicted for their roles in a \$1.7 million conspiracy to distribute 150 kilograms of methamphetamine and 10 kilograms of heroin, as well as illegally possessing numerous firearms.

Kamel Mahgub Elburki, 31, Ashley Brooke Clevenger, 37, Edward Jason Alberty Jr., 23, Rachel Gale Simpson, 36, Daniel Jessie Ruiz, 35, and Matthew John Fabulae, 30, all of Kansas City, Missouri; Cory Matthew Jobe, 27, of Independence, Missouri; Tayler Charles Jones, 25, of Liberty, Missouri; Ashley Anne Fries, 23, of Riverside, Missouri; Justin Ren'e Ramirez, 23, of Bolivar, Missouri; and Richard Dean Saettone II, 39, address unknown, were charged in a 22-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on Dec. 12, 2019. That indictment has been unsealed and made public following the arrests and initial court appearances of the defendants.

The federal indictment alleges that all of the defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine and heroin and in a money-laundering conspiracy from Jan. 1, 2017, to Dec. 12, 2109.

According to court records, law enforcement officers seized 77 firearms during the course of the investigation. Among those firearms were 69 firearms seized at Ruiz's residence, including 45 firearms seized on Feb. 22, 2019, and 20 firearms seized on Oct. 23, 2019, and four firearms seized on Dec. 2, 2019.

The federal indictment replaces a criminal complaint filed against Fabulae on Nov. 26, 2019. According to an affidavit filed in support of the original complaint, Fabulae was involved in at least two shooting incidents. On Feb. 12, 2019, officers attempted to conduct a traffic stop in the Quik Trip parking lot at 7100 NE Parvin Rd., but Fabulae drove out of the parking lot and led officers on a pursuit. Fabulae entered the eastbound lanes while driving westbound into opposing traffic, the

affidavit says, then drove his Jeep off the road and up a hill. Fabulae got out of the vehicle with his dog and ran into some trees and brush. Officers found Fabulae hiding inside a large trash dumpster in a nearby parking lot and arrested him. He was carrying two grams of methamphetamine, a firearm magazine, and \$1,096. Officers also located the drawstring backpack he had been carrying and discarded, the affidavit says, which contained 48 grams of cocaine HCL, 10 grams of marijuana, and 280 grams of methamphetamine. Officers found a Springfield Armory .45-caliber handgun near the location where the foot chase began. Officers searched Fabulae's vehicle and found four cell phones, a tablet, a laptop, and ammunition.

The federal indictment replaces criminal complaints filed against Ruiz and Saettone on Dec. 3, 2019. According to the affidavits filed in support of those complaints, Ruiz and Saettone were arrested that day after Saettone purchased methamphetamine from Ruiz at Ruiz's residence. Officers stopped Saettone as he was leaving Ruiz's residence. Saettone, the affidavit says, was carrying approximately 280 grams of methamphetamine and a loaded SCCY 9mm semi-automatic handgun.

According to the affidavit, officers executed a search warrant at Ruiz's residence on Dec. 2, 2019, and officers seized well over a kilogram of methamphetamine buried in a large metal trash can full of dog food, located in the front room. Officers also seized a Glock .40-caliber handgun with an extended magazine, a Smith and Wesson AR-15-style rifle, an FIE .25-caliber automatic handgun, a Glock .357-caliber handgun, ammunition, a World War II-era gas grenade, multiple packages of suspected marijuana, and more than \$2,000.

An earlier search warrant had been executed at Ruiz's residence on Feb. 22, 2019, when officers seized 45 firearms, more than three kilograms of methamphetamine and approximately \$66,000. A search warrant had also been executed at Ruiz's residence on Oct. 23, 2019, after investigators discovered a FedEx parcel sent to that address, which contained 5.4 pounds of marijuana. Investigators conducted a controlled delivery of the parcel, the affidavit says, which Ruiz (using an alias) accepted. Officers arrested Ruiz and searched his residence, seizing 20 firearms and more than 600 grams of methamphetamine.

In addition to the conspiracies charged in the indictment, Elburki, Jones, Alberty, Simpson, Jobe, Ramirez, Ruiz, Fabulae, and Saettone were also charged together in one count of possessing 500 grams of methamphetamine and one kilogram of heroin to distribute.

Elburki, Jones, Alberty, Jobe, Ramirez, Ruiz, Fries, Fabulae, and Saettone each were charged with one count of possessing, carrying, or using a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. Elburki, Jones, Jobe, Fries, Fabulae, and Saettone each were charged with one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Alberty, Ramirez, Ruiz, and Fabulae each were charged with one count of being a drug user in possession of firearms and ammunition.

The indictment also contains a forfeiture allegation, which would require the defendants to forfeit to the government any proceeds obtained from the alleged drug-trafficking conspiracy, including a

money judgment of approximately \$1,745,000, which allegedly was received in exchange for the distribution of more than 150 kilograms of methamphetamine (based on an average street price of \$250 per ounce) and more than 10 kilograms of heroin (based on an average street price of \$1,200 per ounce).

The charges contained in this indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Rhoades. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Clay County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Buchanan County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Buchanan County Drug Strike Force, and IRS-Criminal Investigation.

# JACKSON COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE COMMITMENT

Jackson County is a primary market area for production, distribution and abuse of dangerous drugs. Although progress has been made in many areas, continued vigilance, enforcement, treatment and education are required. The Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue its successful tradition through community partnerships and a united cooperative effort against illegal narcotics.

Although limited by financial and personnel constraints, the Jackson County Drug Task Force will continue to provide the citizens of these communities the professional service that they have come to deserve and expect. The members of this Task Force have made a commitment to this office, the law enforcement profession and the citizens of this community that no information concerning the illegal sales of narcotics will go without proper investigation. With that in mind, we will strive to continue to improve on the quality of service to this community.

The Jackson County Drug Task Force actively solicits tips and information regarding all illegal narcotics activity. Should the information be related to a jurisdiction outside of Jackson County, personnel from this office will assure that the information is passed on to the proper investigative agency. Individuals having information to pass on may contact this office through phone in complaints at 816-655-DRUG or the TIPS hotline at 816-474-TIPS.