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U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Indiana

Josh J. Minkler | United States Attorney

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Indiana, California drug-trafficking organizations dismantled

Methamphetamine and marijuana trafficked into Terre Haute and Muncie from California

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS – United States Attorney Josh J. Minkler announced today that two drug-trafficking organizations with fifteen total members were indicted by a grand jury for charges of drug-trafficking, unlawful use of a communication facility, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. The cases were investigated and prosecuted by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF).

“If you choose to make a living by selling drugs, promoting violence, and illegally possessing firearms in furtherance of those crimes, we will find you, and you will be prosecuted, federally” said Minkler. “The U.S. Attorney’s Office is committed to keeping our neighborhoods safe by removing violent crime organizations and individuals from our communities.”

According to the superseding indictment, Defendants Tavares Hutcherson, Stefanatos, Mathews, Roshel, Jones, Eyre, Cox, and Carson conspired to distribute methamphetamine. Jones supplied methamphetamine to Hutcherson for re-distribution. Stefanatos acted as a middle-man for Jones and supplied drugs to Hutcherson. Hutcherson and Mathews distributed methamphetamine to each other as well as others in the Terre Haute area, including Cox, Roshel, and Carson. Eyre assisted Hutcherson in distributing drugs and collecting drug proceeds. The superseding indictment further alleges that Hutcherson, Mathews, and Jones possessed firearms

to protect themselves, their drugs, and their drug proceeds. With respect to Grindle, the superseding indictment states that Grindle took over 200 grams of methamphetamine and firearms from Mathews, prompting Mathews to enlist the help of co-conspirators to attempt to recover the drugs and guns.

According to a second superseding indictment arising out of the same investigation, Defendant James Briscoe, Page, Clephane, Bays, Pugh, and Bell conspired to distribute methamphetamine and marijuana. Pugh arranged for methamphetamine to be shipped from California to Indiana for re-distribution by Briscoe and Bell. In addition, Briscoe obtained methamphetamine from Page who operated out of Anderson, Indiana. Briscoe in turn supplied methamphetamine and marijuana to Bell, Clephane, Bays, and others. The superseding indictment also alleges that Briscoe, Page, Clephane, and Pugh possessed firearms, including a Hi-Point, 9mm pistol, a Mossberg, 12 gauge shotgun, a Micro Draco, 7.62 caliber pistol, a LLAMA, .45 caliber pistol, and an AK-style, short barrel rifle.

The indicted defendants, their ages, and residences are as follows:

Tavares Hutcherson, 42, Terre Haute, Ind.
Timothy Stefanatos, 40, Indianapolis, Ind.
Brock Mathews, 29, Terre Haute, Ind.
Deena Roshel, 52, Terre Haute, Ind.
Kyra Grindle, 19, Terre Haute, Ind.
Brad W. Jones, 35, Indianapolis, Ind.
Travis Eyre, 30, Terre Haute, Ind.
Robert Cox, 33, Terre Haute, Ind.
Zachary Carson, 25, Terre Haute, Ind.

James Briscoe, 36, Muncie, Ind.
Damarus Page, 37, Anderson, Ind.
Bradley Clephane, 35, Gosport, Spencer, Ind.
Christopher Bays, 33, Brazil, Ind.
Jamar Pugh, 26, Muncie, Ind.
James Bell, 40, Muncie, Ind.

The lead investigative agencies were the Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Other agencies that assisted in the investigation include the Indiana State Police, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, Terre Haute Police Department, Muncie Police Department, Anderson Police Department, Madison County Drug Task Force, Vigo County Sheriff's Department, Vigo County Drug Task Force, Clay County Sheriff's Department, and the Owen County Sherriff's Department.

“The individuals arrested during this complex investigation were responsible for transporting large quantities of methamphetamine into the Wabash Valley area,” said DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge Michael Gannon. “Throughout the course of this investigation, agents seized approximately 23 pounds of methamphetamine, and 13

firearms. DEA commends the outstanding work that was done by the Terre Haute Police Department, the Indiana State Police, the Vigo County Drug Task Force, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Attorney's Office. This violent drug trafficking organization showed complete disregard for the fine citizens of Terre Haute and utilized fear and intimidation to aid their criminal activity. All drug dealers need to take notice that the newly formed DEA Terre Haute Office along with our law enforcement partners will utilize all available resources to take investigations to the highest levels and steam roll drug dealers who are peddling garbage into our communities."

"The United States Postal Inspection Service is committed to the protection of our nation's mail system, and to ridding the criminals' use of the mail for the transportation of illegal drugs. This case is a great example of how working together with our law enforcement partners, we are able to make progress in getting the drugs off the streets in Indiana and California. The arrest and indictment of these defendants should serve as a warning to others who seek to commit drug-trafficking through the U.S. Postal Service." said Inspector in Charge Edward Gallashaw of the Detroit Division, U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Indiana State Police Superintendent Doug Carter commented, "I am extremely proud of our participation in the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force." Carter continued, "The hard work of our assigned investigators, in collaboration with other member representatives, speaks to the dedication of state, county, local and federal law enforcement partners who work daily to make Indiana communities safer for everyone to enjoy."

"Too often, violence in our city is connected to the trafficking of illegal narcotics. These bad actors are willing to profit from crime and violence in our neighborhoods, and working closely with law enforcement partners to remove them from our community is crucial to making Indianapolis a safer place for all to call home," said IMPD Chief Bryan Roach.

"We are always eager to partner with federal law enforcement in an effort to aggressively investigate the predatory practices of those who seek to exploit the weak and drug-addicted for their own personal financial gain," said Sergeant Chad Boynton, Anderson Police Department K9 Supervisor and Madison County Drug Task Force Supervisor. "This investigation has undoubtedly produced a positive impact within Central Indiana, having resulted in the arrest of several significant drug traffickers."

According to Assistant United States Attorney M. Kendra Klump, who is prosecuting these cases for the government, defendants, if convicted, each face up to life in prison, except for Grindle, who faces up to 40 years in prison.

An Indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

In October 2017, United States Attorney Josh J. Minkler announced a Strategic Plan designed to shape and strengthen the District's response to its most significant public safety challenges. This prosecution demonstrates the Office's firm commitment to prosecuting those

who engage in organized drug and violent crime. See United States Attorney's Office, Southern District of Indiana [Strategic Plan](#) 2.1.

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