



Orange County News

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District Attorney Hoovler Announces Final Guilty Pleas in Drug Distribution Conspiracy Case

Defendants Pled Guilty to Conspiracy and Drug Charges

“Operation Family Ties” Targeted Major Narcotics Distributors

Orange County District Attorney David M. Hoovler announced on Tuesday, July 25, 2017, that several additional defendants have pled guilty before Orange County Court Judge Robert H. Freehill to conspiracy and drug charges, in connection the “Operation Family Ties” narcotics conspiracy investigation. With those guilty pleas, the “Operation Family Ties” prosecution has been concluded, with several other defendants having pled guilty previously.

In May, 2017, an Orange County grand jury charged a number of defendants with conspiring to sell cocaine and heroin, largely in the Newburgh area. The indictments charge Conspiracy in the Second Degree, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, as well as other charges.

On March 13, 2017, the New York State Police, the City of Newburgh Police Department, and the Orange County District Attorney’s Office executed sixteen search warrants and arrested over thirty individuals on felony charges as part of a nine-month narcotics investigation, dubbed “Operation Family Ties.” The United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the Town of New Windsor Police, the Town of Newburgh Police, the City of Port Jervis Police, and the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance also aided in the execution of the warrants.

The investigation targeted the distribution of heroin, cocaine, PCP, and marijuana in the City of Newburgh and several surrounding towns in Orange County. The investigation began in June, 2016, when the City of Newburgh Police Department and the New York State Police received information about illegal narcotics sales in the area of 170 Carson Avenue in the City of Newburgh.

The final pleas in the “Operation Family Ties” prosecution were as follows:

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Plea Date</u>	<u>Plea Charge</u>
Lamont Williams, Sr.	7/25/2017	Conspiracy 2; Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance 3
Steven Hall	6/29/2017	Conspiracy 2
Corey Arnold	6/20/2017	Conspiracy 4
Sabrina Herring	7/18/2017	Conspiracy 2
Gabriel Richards	6/26/2017	Conspiracy 2
Corey Perdue	7/10/2017	Conspiracy 5; Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance 3
Joseph Horace	6/21/2017	Conspiracy 2
Ryan Nagle	7/10/2017	Conspiracy 4
William McNeill	6/26/2017	Conspiracy 2
Earnest Washington	7/19/2017	Conspiracy 2

Several of the above defendants are facing significant prison terms, including, in Williams’s case as much as ten to twenty years; and in Hall’s case five to fifteen years. Other defendants are facing shorter incarceration sentences in Orange County Jail and probationary terms.

In addition to the criminal charges, the Orange County District Attorney’s Office has begun a civil forfeiture proceeding against many of the defendants, in order to seize from them the profits that they have made by illegally selling narcotics. The suit seeks over \$3,000,000 in illegally-obtained profits.

District Attorney Hoovler thanked the New York State Police Community Narcotics Enforcement Team, the City of Newburgh Police Department, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the Town of New Windsor Police, the Town of Newburgh Police, the City of Port Jervis Police, and the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance Criminal Investigations Division for their efforts in this investigation. District Attorney Hoovler highly commended the New York State Police for their investigation, given the complexity of the case.

Assistant District Attorney Neal Eriksen assisted in the investigation of the case and is prosecuting all of the defendants charged in the operation.

“Organized drug conspiracies are helping to fuel the opioid epidemic,” said District Attorney Hoovler, “making enormous profits off the suffering of people who are addicted and can’t help themselves. ‘Operation Family Ties’ represents the success that law enforcement can have through coordinated efforts to attack high-level drug dealers and offenders who shield them-

selves from prosecution by dealing drugs through lower-level conspirators. Education and treatment are important strategies to keep people away from drugs, but it is becoming increasingly clear that vigorous law enforcement is necessary to dry up the supply of illegal drugs. We will use every lawful enforcement tool in our toolkit, including wiretaps, civil forfeiture, and creative charging, to fight illegal narcotics dealers.”

A criminal charge is merely an allegation that a defendant has committed a violation of the criminal law, and it is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the State’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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