

Prison Time and Guilty Pleas for Members of Heroin Trafficking Group Highlight Recent Successes for the Department of Justice

Three people arrested as part of "Operation Son Sun," one of the largest heroin trafficking organizations in the state's history, have entered pleas for their involvement in the group.

Deputy Attorneys General Mark Denney, Caterina Gatto, John Taylor, and Julie Finocchiaro secured a plea from Brian Palmer, 27, of Newark, for criminal racketeering and 5 counts of drug dealing heroin for a habitual offender. After entering the plea, Palmer was sentenced to 16 years in jail. Additionally, Deputy Attorneys General Mark Denney and Caterina Gatto secured pleas from two other people arrested as part of "Operation Son Sun." Lakenya Howard, 24, of Wilmington, pled to conspiracy to commit criminal racketeering, and conspiracy to commit drug dealing heroin. Mack Andino, 39, of Newark, pled to conspiracy to commit criminal racketeering, drug dealing cocaine, and possession of a firearm by a person prohibited. Both were arrested in November 2014.

Other sentencings that have recently been overseen by Department of Justice prosecutors include:

Deputy Attorneys General Mark Denney, Jamie McCloskey and Allison Abessinio secured a 30 year prison sentence for 36-year-old William Barksdale of Wilmington, as a habitual offender, after pleading guilty to Tier 4 drug dealing and possession of a firearm by a person prohibited. Barksdale was

the leader of the Silver Springs drug trafficking organization, targeted by New Castle County Police with the help of the FBI in March 2014. The break-up of the organization netted police more than 13,500 bags of heroin.

Deputy Attorneys General Mark Denney and Caterina Gatto secured a plea from Cleon Stewart, 45, of Wilmington, for drug dealing heroin, and second degree conspiracy. While conducting a drug investigation in October 2014 into a racketeering enterprise, officers watched as Stewart sold heroin in the 2500 block of Jessup Street in Wilmington. After his plea was accepted, Stewart was sentenced to 30 months in prison.

Deputy Attorney General Casey Ewart secured a prison sentence for Timothy Jones, 49, of Seaford. Jones had pled guilty to one count of drug dealing and one count of possession of a firearm by a person prohibited. In February 2015, Jones traded heroin to a drug user for a stolen firearm. Jones then agreed to return the firearm and provide some additional heroin in exchange for cash. He was sentenced 5 years in prison, followed by 18 months of Level 3 probation.

Attorney General John Taylor secured a 23-year prison sentence for 28-year-old Alex Ryle of Wilmington. In April 2014, Wilmington Police stopped Ryle in the 200 block of East 35th street for a probation violation. When taking him into custody, police found a loaded .25 caliber handgun and crack cocaine in Ryle's pockets. Ryle was found guilty of possession of a firearm by a person prohibited, and carrying a concealed deadly weapon. He was sentenced as a habitual offender.

Deputy Attorney General Tim Maguire secured a guilty plea from Ronald Grine, 40, of Wilmington, for second degree burglary. In November 2013, Grine broke into a home in the 200 block of Country Club Drive in Newark, and stole jewelry. Grine was sentenced to three years in prison.

Deputy Attorney General Karin Volker secured a prison sentence

for 25-year-old Aurelio Sanchez of Mexico for second degree rape. Sanchez pled guilty to raping a 10-year-old girl while visiting her family in Delaware. Sanchez was sentenced to 25 years in prison, suspended after 18 years.

Deputy Attorney General Abigail Layton secured a plea and prison sentence for Samuel Diamond, 30, of Wilmington. An undercover investigation into child pornography led officers to execute a search warrant at Diamond's home, where they discovered images of child pornography as defined by Delaware law. Diamond pled guilty to two counts of possession of child pornography. He was sentenced to seven months in prison followed by probation, and he must register as a Tier II sex offender.

Deputy Attorney General Jenna Milecki secured sentences for co-defendants Scott McFarland, 38, and Devin Holt, 20, both of Wilmington, on two counts of first degree robbery, one count of second degree robbery, second degree burglary, and related charges. In October 2014, McFarland and Holt committed the armed robbery of Party Pizza restaurant on Boxwood Road in Wilmington. McFarland received a total of 8 years at Level V, and Holt was sentenced to 7 years, 6 months at Level V, with both serving probation after their prison terms.

Deputy Attorney General Sonia Augusthy secured a prison sentence for 31-year-old Kenneth Fowler of Newark for drug dealing. In December 2012, Newark Police, when taking Fowler into custody on outstanding warrants, police found marijuana, cocaine, and several cell phones in the car he was driving. Fowler was sentenced to five years in prison.

Deputy Attorney General Michael Degliobizzi secured a sentence for Raymond Phipps, 50, of Wilmington, for two counts of third degree burglary, and one count of possession of burglar's tools. During the spring of 2015, Phipps broke into three Wilmington businesses: Compton Liquors on East 9th Street, Ms. Black and White Front Door Café on North King Street, and

Young's Market on North Walnut Street. Phipps was declared a habitual offender on one burglary count, and sentenced to 18 months at Level V, to be served at the Greentree Long Program for substance abuse treatment. All other Level V time will be suspended for probation with a substance abuse component.

Deputy Attorney General John Kirk secured a sentence for Walter Cotier, 35, of Milford for four counts of third degree burglary. In 2014, Cotier was involved in string of burglaries to buildings in the Milford area. Cotier was sentenced 18 months in prison, and successful completion of the Key program, followed by Level 4 CREST program, and then Level 3 CREST aftercare.

Deputy Attorney general Stephen McDonald secured a prison sentence for Joseph Young, 41, of Newport. Earlier this year, Young pled guilty to two charges of home improvement fraud, and two charges of theft with the victim being over the age of 62. In June 2013, and December 2014, Young took money from elderly women in exchange for home repairs, but Young never performed the work. Young was sentenced to six years in prison, and though incarcerated since March, Judge Paul Wallace sentenced Young pursuant to 11 Del. C. Sec. 4204(k) (known colloquially as "K time") whereby a defendant gets no credit for good time.

Convictions and guilty pleas were obtained by Department of Justice prosecutors in the following cases:

Deputy Attorneys General Sonia Augusthy and Christina Kontis secured a conviction against Ramon Joyner, 34, of Arlington, Virginia. In February 2015, Joyner raped and strangled and tied up a woman in a room at the Quality Inn Motel on Geoffrey Drive in Newark. A jury found Joyner guilty of first degree kidnapping, first degree unlawful sexual contact, strangulation, and malicious interference with emergency communications.

Deputy Attorney General John Taylor secured a conviction against 22-year-old Jawaun Shockley, of Wilmington, for drug dealing, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, possession of a firearm with obliterated serial number, and possession of heroin. Shockley, who was wanted for violating his bail conditions, ran from police when they saw him in the 200 block of West 6th Street in Wilmington while on routine patrol in October 2014, and threw a loaded semi-automatic handgun as he tried to escape.

Deputy Attorney General Renee Leverette secured a conviction in a non-jury trial against William Hoyle, 46, of Wilmington for driving under the influence. He was sentenced to a year in prison, suspended for a year of Level I probation, and ordered to pay a \$500 fine.

Deputy Attorney General Erika Flaschner secured a conviction in a non-jury trial against Jenna Morris, 25, of Kennedyville, Maryland, for shoplifting. In April 2015, a loss prevention officer at Walmart in Middletown, noticed Morris put items in a tote bag while shopping at the store. Morris left without paying for the items, and was stopped by security after she exited the store.

Deputy Attorney General Rebecca Song secured a conviction for driving under the influence, against 47-year-old Antonio Camacho of Middletown. Camacho was sentenced to six months in prison, suspended for one year probation. He must also pay fines and court costs totaling \$1,082.

Deputy Attorney General Patrick Smith secured a conviction against Jose Santos, 25, of Astoria, New York for failure to obey a traffic device, and failure to have insurance. In October 2014, officers noticed a car go straight through the intersection of Fairway Road and Dunbar Road in Newark, despite signs clearly stating all traffic must turn right. Officers approached the driver, later identified as Santos, who was unable to produce proof of insurance.

Deputy Attorney General Erika Flaschner secured a conviction against 25-year-old Vaquan Williams of Newark for shoplifting. In March of this year, Williams took a nail gun from the Home Depot Store off Route 13 in New Castle without paying for it.

Deputy Attorney General Caterina Gatto secured a conviction against 26-year-old Anthony Washington of Middletown, for drug dealing in heroin, aggravated possession of heroin, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, conspiracy second degree, and possession of drug paraphernalia. In December 2014, a State Trooper noticed a gun and what turned out to be heroin in a running, but unoccupied vehicle in the parking lot of the Fairview Inn on South Market Street in Wilmington. Video surveillance led police to a room at the motel, where they later found Washington, along with additional drugs and drug paraphernalia.

Deputy Attorney General Matthew Frawley secured a guilty plea to charges of first and second degree assault, second degree conspiracy, and possession of a firearm by a person prohibited from 27-year-old Keith Campbell of Wilmington. In November 2014, Campbell walked up to a car parked in the unit block of South Street in New Castle, fired several shots at the two people in the car, striking them both. Campbell faces a minimum of 12 years at sentencing.

Deputy Attorney General Tim Maguire secured guilty pleas from 48-year old Colleen Lobo of New Castle, for aggravated menacing, endangering the welfare of a child, and resisting arrest. In February 2015, Lobo, intoxicated and armed with a knife, threatened another woman and her family who were living at the Milan Motel on Philadelphia Pike in Claymont.

Deputy Attorneys General Tim Maguire and Julie Finocchiaro secured a plea in their case against 21-year-old Joshua Campos of New Castle. In October 2014, Campos robbed a man at gunpoint at the Hampton Walk Apartments on Bacon Avenue in New Castle. Campos pled guilty to first degree robbery, second

degree assault, and second degree conspiracy. He will be sentenced in January.

Deputy Attorney General Diana Dunn secured a guilty plea for sexual extortion from 24-year-old Tyair Brown of Wilmington. During a fight with his girlfriend in May 2015, Brown punched the woman in the face, and forced her to perform a sex act on him. Sentencing is scheduled for January.

Deputy Attorney General Phillip Casale secured a plea from 45-year-old Dereck Weddington of Wilmington for drug dealing. In April 2015, officers viewing Wilmington's Downtown Visions cameras, watched Weddington conduct two drug transactions in the 900 block of North Pine Street in Wilmington.

Deputy Attorney General Jenna Milecki secured a plea from 48-year-old Mandel Walker of Middletown, to third degree burglary, and disregarding a police signal. In December 2013, a Middletown Police Officer saw Walker's car stopped in a no parking zone in the 500 block of New Street. As the officer approached the car, Walker fled at a high rate of speed, eventually crashing his vehicle into a utility pole in the 400 block of New Street. Walker ran from the car, and was arrested a short time later after someone called police to report a man on her back porch. Walker was also convicted of second degree robbery, in connection with a May 2014 incident in which he stole items from the Home Depot in Middletown. Walker will face a minimum mandatory five-year prison sentence for the robbery.

Deputy Attorney General Michael Degliobizzi secured a plea from Enrique Torruella to drug dealing heroin. In March 2014, police stopped Torruella on I-95 near Concord Pike after he was speeding and swerving along the highway. A police K9 officer made a positive indication that Torruella had drugs in the car. After getting a search warrant, officers found 4,350 bags of heroin hidden beneath a child's car seat. Torruella was sentenced to 15 years in prison, suspended after 15

months, for 18 months Level III probation.

Deputy Attorney General Michael Degliobizzi secured a plea from 22-year-old Bruce McDade of Wilmington, for carrying a concealed deadly weapon. In September 2015, Wilmington Police received a call about a man walking in the area of Prices Park at 26th and Thatcher Streets, and carrying a gun. When officers arrived, McDade ran, fleeing into a home in the 700 block of East 26th Street. The homeowner let police inside where they arrested McDade. McDade was sentenced to 8 years Level V, suspended after 6 months at Level IV, for 6 months Level III probation.

Deputy Attorney General Michael Degliobizzi secured a plea in State v. James Dyton to third degree burglary and theft under \$1500. In August 2015, Dyton entered a car parked in the 2900 block of Biddle Street in Wilmington, and stole a black leather wallet. A few weeks later, Dyton entered a pickup truck parked in the 200 block of Bancroft Parkway, and took a set of wireless headphones, and a pair of hair clippers. He was sentenced to 4 years Level V, suspended after 60 days for Level III probation.

Deputy Attorney General Tiphonie Miller secured a guilty plea from 32-year-old Michelle Leal of Wilmington, to one count of obtaining a prescription drug by forgery. Leal was arrested for participating in a prescription drug conspiracy, in which she was one of several people recruited to use stolen and forged prescription slips to have prescriptions for Alprazolam, a drug used to treat anxiety disorders, panic disorders, and anxiety, filled. Leal turned herself in earlier this year, and agreed to pay restitution to Delaware Medicaid and Medical Assistance in the amount of \$76.99, the total paid by DMMA for the fraudulent prescription. Following her plea, Leal was sentenced to one year in prison, suspended for one year at Level III probation.

Deputy Attorney General Tiphonie Miller secured a guilty plea

to one count of abusing a patient or resident of a facility from James Croner, 46, of Wilmington, a former mental health associate at Meadowood Behavioral Health Systems. In March 2015, Croner physically abused the resident for whom he provided one-to-one care for. Croner was sentenced to one year in prison, suspended for one year at level II probation, suspended after six months.

Deputy Attorney General Renee Hrivnak secured a plea from Raymond Davis, 40, of Newark, to second degree assault. In August 2015, Davis entered a home in the 2600 block of North Heald Street, and found the woman who lives there sleeping on the couch next to another man. Davis had previously lived in the home with the woman. After telling the other man to leave, Davis began pushing and punching the woman.

Deputy Attorney General Renee Hrivnak secured a global plea from 25-year-old John McCormick of Bear, resolving three cases. McCormick pled guilty to aggravated menacing relating to an incident from October 2014 during which he aimed a handgun at his father and himself. He also pled guilty to two counts of second degree burglary. McCormick broke into a home in the 300 block of Taft Avenue in Wilmington through a basement window, and stole medication. In September 2015, McCormick entered a home in the 100 block of Kristins Way in Newark, and while gathering items to steal, woke up one of the residents, who along with his roommates, held McCormick until police arrived.

Deputy Attorney General Cari Chapman secured guilty pleas from David Wood, 60, of Wilmington, to aggravated menacing, terroristic threatening and second degree reckless endangering. During an argument in December 2014, Wood threw a space heater at his wife, and then pointed a gun at her and her dog which she was holding. He was sentenced to Level III probation with a focus on mental health treatment, and is prohibited from owning or possessing firearms.

Deputy Attorney General Zoe Plerhoples secured a sentence for

Damon Rutherford, 32, of Wilmington, for second degree assault, and possession of a deadly weapon during the commission of a felony. In November 2013, Rutherford confronted his ex-girlfriend on the street outside of her friend's home in the 1300 block of Lancaster Avenue in Wilmington. The two had a verbal argument that turned physical, and then Rutherford pulled out a BB air-pistol and shot the victim at close range in both legs. Rutherford assaulted the victim again at her own home in December 2013. Rutherford was sentenced to three years in prison for the second degree assault, suspended after one year at Level IV, suspended after six months for two years at Level III probation. For the gun charge, he was sentenced to three years in prison.