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**JURY CONVICTS DRUG KINGPIN OF MULTIPLE MURDERS;
DEFENDANT FACES MANDATORY LIFE IMPRISONMENT
WITHOUT PAROLE**

Nashville, TN - May 21, 2008 - Edward M. Yarbrough, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee, announced that Jamal Shakir of Los Angeles was convicted by a jury of multiple murders, being the “kingpin” of a violent interstate gang-based drug trafficking operation, money laundering, and obstruction of justice after an eight-month trial in federal court. The United States had requested that the jury sentence Shakir to death, but the jury was unable to unanimously agree on a sentence as required to impose the death penalty. The defendant now faces multiple mandatory life sentences when he is sentenced by Senior United States District Judge John T. Nixon on October 14, 2008 for the murders and the other criminal conduct.

The jury’s verdict in the first phase of the trial found the defendant guilty of running a continuing criminal enterprise which distributed over 150 kilograms of cocaine as well as large amounts of crack cocaine and marijuana. Evidence at trial established that Shakir was a member of the Rollin’ 90s Crips based in Los Angeles, and that he recruited members of that street gang, as well as others, to be part of a violent drug trafficking business which operated in Los Angeles, Nashville, Memphis, and Oklahoma City, with temporary excursions into Charleston, South Carolina, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and other cities.

The jury found that nine murders were committed by the defendant, his co-conspirators, or as part of the defendant’s criminal enterprise between 1994 and 1997. The jury found that three of the murdered victims were killed to prevent them from cooperating with law enforcement, and that the defendant caused another person to travel in interstate commerce from Nashville to Oklahoma City to commit a crime of violence, which resulted in a double murder and the shooting of a three year old child in both elbows. The child was found with the decomposing bodies of the murder victims in an Oklahoma City home about 1 ½ weeks after the murders were committed. According to the trial evidence, the child victim survived by drinking toilet water until she was found inside the home with the decomposing bodies of her pregnant mother and the mother’s boyfriend.

The nine murder victims are: Richard Chambers, who was killed in Cheatham County, Tennessee on August 29, 1994; Solomon Harris, who was killed in Los Angeles on September 29, 1995; Sharon Duran, who was killed in Los Angeles on December 13, 1995; Anthony Rogers, who was killed in Oklahoma City on July 20, 1996; Shannon

Walker, who was killed in Los Angeles on October 3, 1996; Kenard Murry and Regina Suetopka, who were killed in Oklahoma City on January 23, 1997; Barney Moten, who was killed in Los Angeles on February 21, 1997; and Woody Pilcher, who was killed in Oklahoma City on August 2, 1997. Along with the murder convictions, the jury also found the defendant guilty of using juveniles in his drug trafficking business, using and carrying firearms during drug trafficking and violent crimes, money laundering, obstruction of justice, and other crimes. The jury also found that other victims were abducted, assaulted, and threatened as part of the defendant's interstate criminal enterprise.

United States Attorney Edward Yarbrough expressed his appreciation for the jurors who served on this lengthy trial, as well as for the victims' families who supported the effort to bring Shakir to justice. He also stated, "This office, and our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners here, in Los Angeles, and in Oklahoma City, have demonstrated our dedication and perseverance to the pursuit of justice in this case. We have served the public's interest in having 12 fellow citizens try to decide the appropriate punishment for this particular defendant and his crimes. We are pleased that families of nine murder victims have had some of their questions answered through the jury's verdict which connected those murders to the defendant or his business."

Two defendants, Donnell Young and Eben Payne, are still awaiting trial, and the United States has filed notices of intent to seek the death penalty as to those defendants if they are convicted at trial. The public is reminded that these defendants are presumed innocent of the charges against them, and the conviction of Shakir by this jury is not evidence or any indication that either of these two defendants are guilty of the charges against them. Whether they will be convicted, and if so, what sentence they will receive, is up to the juries which will be selected to decide those separate cases.

U.S. Attorney Yarbrough noted that he hopes this prosecution will deter others from committing such crimes in this district: "Gang members and other armed thugs should take heed. Criminals, whether here or in other cities, who think they can target and victimize this community through violence and large-scale drug dealing should know from our unyielding pursuit of justice in this case that our community is willing and able to crack these cases, and to bring criminals to justice even from the streets of South Central Los Angeles. We will be equally unrelenting in pursuing other criminals who commit such crimes, whether they are from this district, or from other cities who think they can profit from exporting their crimes to our city. We in law enforcement will fight those who commit these atrocious crimes, but we also need parents, neighbors, teachers, and community leaders to take a stand with us. We hope they can use the lessons learned from this and other gang and drug prosecutions to talk to their friends and children in an effort to prevent them from joining gangs or other criminal groups and deciding to commit these types of atrocious crimes. Early action and intervention are critical to stopping the deadly lure of gang life and drug trafficking. If they still choose to commit such crimes, we stand ready to carry out our responsibilities."

The trial is part of a multi-year Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force investigation which has led to the federal prosecution of more than 40 defendants for drug trafficking, money laundering, firearms, and violent offenses. The cases are being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office in Nashville. The Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Task Force program seeks to investigate and prosecute criminal organizations through joint investigations and information sharing between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Participating agencies in this investigation include the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, the Oklahoma City Police Department, and the Regional Organized Crime Information Center. Assistant United States Attorneys Sunny A.M. Koshy and Van S. Vincent prosecuted the case.