



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

*United States Attorney Donald W. Washington
Western District of Louisiana*

United States Courthouse • 300 Fannin Street, Suite 3201 • Shreveport, Louisiana 71101-3068 • (318) 676-3600
United States Courthouse • 800 Lafayette Street, Suite 2200 • Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-7206 • (337) 262-6618

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Contact: Donald W. Washington (337-262-6618)
William J. Flanagan (318-676-3600)

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GANG MEMBERS INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY AFTER INVESTIGATION BY SAFE STREETS TASK FORCE

Local members of Cuatro Flats Gang based in Los Angeles alleged to be involved in trafficking methamphetamine and stolen vehicles between Louisiana and California

Lafayette, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington, along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Iberia Parish Sheriff Sid Hebert, Lafayette Parish Sheriff Michael W. Neustrom, St. Martin Parish Sheriff Ronald Theriot, St. Mary Parish Sheriff David A. Naquin, Lafayette Police Chief Jim Craft, and Morgan City Police Chief Jim Christy, announced the indictment of nine defendants for numerous alleged federal offenses.

On October 11, 2007, a sealed 23-count indictment was returned by the federal grand jury. The indictment includes conspiracy to import and distribute multi-kilo quantities of methamphetamine from California to Louisiana. The indictment also charges multiple counts of distribution of methamphetamine, firearms violations, distribution of methamphetamine where children reside, multiple counts of possession of stolen motor vehicles, mailing threatening communications, unlawful use of communication facilities, continuing criminal enterprise, forfeiture and carjacking.

For the last two years, members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Gang Task Force have been investigating members of the Cuatro Flats Gang, based in east Los Angeles. The investigation revealed that members of Cuatro Flats have been bringing narcotics and stolen vehicles into Louisiana to distribute to several local gangs. The FBI's Safe Streets Gang Task Force is a federally funded initiative which combats violent street gangs.

Indicted are the following individuals:

- **ARTHUR BASALDUA**, a/k/a Yogi, a/k/a Joey, a/k/a Art, a/k/a Artie, a/k/a Leo Perez, a/k/a joe Perez, age 28, of New Iberia, Louisiana;
- **BOUNTHONG XAPHILOM**, a/k/a Nick, age 36, Hofton City, Texas;
- **ISRAEL PEREZ**, age 25, New Iberia, Louisiana;
- **DUC HUU PHAM**, age 33, Los Angeles, California;
- **ENG CHAMPKUNGSING**, age 28, Broussard, Louisiana;
- **PHANUT PHONCHINDA**, a/k/a Peanut, age 24, New Iberia, Louisiana;
- **TRAVIS JOSEPH**, age 24, New Iberia, Louisiana;
- **CHRISTOPHER AUCOIN**, age 30, New Iberia, Louisiana; and
- **MISAY CHANDAKHAM**, age 31, Broussard, Louisiana.

All nine defendants are charged with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, which carries a penalty of a minimum 10 years up to life in prison, a fine of up to \$4 million, and a mandatory term of 5 years supervised release after confinement.

In addition to the conspiracy charge, the defendant, **ISRAEL PEREZ**, is charged with one count of possession of a stolen motor vehicle. The defendant, **DUC HUU PHAM**, is charged in multiple counts with the unlawful use of a communication facility. The defendant, **ARTHUR BASALDUA**, is charged in 22 of

the 23 counts, including carjacking and operating a continuing criminal enterprise, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years and a maximum life term in prison.

All indictments are merely accusations and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Defendants are entitled to a presumption of innocence under the law, and the government has the burden of proving every element of the charges beyond a reasonable doubt.

The South Central Louisiana Safe Street Gang Task Force is comprised of agents from the FBI, Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Martin Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Police Department, and the Morgan City Police Department.

The prosecution team is headed by members of this task force as well as Assistant U.S. Attorney James T. McManus.

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