



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Rodolfo Moreno

“DETROIT THUG LORDZ” MEMBER SENTENCED TO 12 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

Younger Brother Sentence To 32 Months In Custody

Rodolfo Moreno, 20, of Detroit was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment in federal court today, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced. Joining in the announcement was Special Agent In Charge Thomas E. Brandon, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Moreno pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, and marijuana before United States District Judge David Lawson on September 19, 2007. This was Moreno's fourth felony drug conviction and he was sentenced as a career offender under federal sentencing guidelines.

As part of his plea, Moreno admitted to membership in the “Detroit Thug Lordz” or “DTL,” an armed drug trafficking gang in northwest Detroit, and to distributing crack cocaine on the gang's behalf. The Detroit Thug Lordz territory ran along West Warren Avenue and extended from Evergreen to the Southfield Freeway. The group maintained drug houses on Woodmont, Lawndale, Winthrop, Rockdale, Longacre, and Rosemont Streets. Firearms were

kept at and moved among the various houses for protection. Drug sales were accomplished through calls to pre-arranged cellular telephone numbers and deliveries made with rented vehicles. Gang members were paid as much as \$5,000 per month for distributing various drugs, including crack cocaine, powder cocaine, and marijuana. Minors were used to distribute drugs on the gang's behalf.

“Gangs like the Thug Lordz can be beaten when federal, state, and local law enforcement team up with community groups to fight organized drug trafficking and the dangers it brings to our neighborhoods,” said U.S. Attorney Murphy. “That is the purpose of our Operation TIDE, which partners all law enforcement stakeholders in the City of Detroit to provide hope to residents and to take violent drug offenders off the streets. Today’s sentence is an example of the results that can be achieved from such teamwork.”

Federal agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives ("ATF"), assisted by Detroit Police Department officers, investigated the gang's activities between May 2, 2006 and February 13, 2007. Fifteen undercover purchases of crack cocaine, powder cocaine, and marijuana were made. Four of the gang's drug houses were raided and additional seizures were made from gang members' vehicles. In total, agents secured 66 grams of crack cocaine, 67 grams of powder cocaine, and 4.6 kilograms of marijuana.

“The sentence to be served by this gang member illustrates the positive impact of focused task forces like Operation TIDE. We will continue our joint enforcement efforts to rid the City of Detroit of the violence that is bred by drugs and guns,” stated SAC Brandon.

On Friday, February 1, Moreno's younger brother, Michael Moreno, 19, was sentenced to 32 months imprisonment for his role in the Detroit Thug Lordz conspiracy by Judge Lawson. Michael Moreno had pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute cocaine and marijuana on September 19, 2007.

Still awaiting sentencing for their drug trafficking activities are co-defendants Nicholas Jaime, a/k/a Kilo, 21, of Detroit; Hassan Aljibory, 23, of Warren; Randi Carl Diggs, 19, of Detroit; and Karen Haskins, 49, of Detroit. Two defendants in the case, Isaias Quesada, 23, of Detroit, and Omar Gladson, 20, of Detroit are scheduled for trial on April 8.

Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Operation TIDE is the unprecedented, long-term law enforcement and community collaboration where federal, state, county and local law enforcement officials meet regularly and work in cooperation to reduce violent crimes and prevent recidivism by focusing on the “worst of the worst” in Northwest Detroit, Detroit’s largest police district.

Other PSN Operation TIDE Task Force partners include the U.S. Marshals Service, the FBI, the Wayne County Sheriff’s Department, the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, and the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Citizens with information concerning illegal guns, gangs with guns, armed drug trafficking or the trafficking of illegal guns are encouraged to call 800-ATF-GUNS. Callers can remain anonymous. This number is managed and answered by law enforcement, ATF agents who work directly with local police departments. For information about Project Safe Neighborhoods call 1-800-891-8881 or visit www.psnworks.org.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Leonid Feller.