



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland
Northern Division*

*Allen F. Loucks
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer*

*36 South Charles Street
Fourth Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201*

*410-209-4800
TTY/TDD:410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

**FEBRUARY 2, 2005
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT
VICKIE E. LEDUC, AUSA
(410) 209-4885**

**13 INDICTED FOR OPERATING A
VIOLENT BALTIMORE DRUG TRAFFICKING ENTERPRISE**

Baltimore, Maryland – Allen F. Loucks, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that a federal grand jury has indicted Howard Rice, age 38, Raeshio Rice, age 32, both of Baltimore, Maryland, and 11 others with crimes arising from their operation of a large narcotics-trafficking enterprise in Baltimore over a 10-year period.

The 20-count indictment charges that from 1995 through 2004, the defendants operated a racketeering enterprise (the “Rice Organization”) responsible for the distribution of large quantities of cocaine and heroin in northwest Baltimore City, as well as multiple contract murders. The Rice Organization is alleged to have distributed more than 1,500 kilograms of cocaine and heroin in the Park Heights area of Baltimore City.

The indictment charges that the Rice Organization preserved its power, territory and profits and retaliated against rival drug organizations through the use of intimidation, violence and threats of violence. The indictment alleges that Eric Hall was a “hitman” for the Rice Organization who carried out acts of violence on behalf of the organization. The specific acts of violence charged in the indictment include the December 16, 1996 murder of Dante Green, the December 27, 1996

attempted murder of Dennis Smith, the September 1, 2001 attempted murder of Shawn Hawkins, and the June 22, 2003 murder of Marvin Nutter.

Six of the defendants – Howard Rice, Raeshio Rice, Anthony Leonard, age 35, of Elkridge, Maryland, Steven Campbell, age 39, of Baltimore, Maryland, Eric Clash, age 26, of Baltimore Maryland and Eric Hall, age 34, of Baltimore, Maryland – are charged with racketeering and racketeering conspiracy. Those six defendants and three others – Keenan Dorsey, age 39, Michael Felder, age 39, both of Baltimore, Maryland and Chet Pajardo, age 36, of Owings Mills, Maryland – were also charged with participating in a conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine from 1995 through the present. Clash, Hall, Dorsey, George Butler, age 30, of Owings Mills, James Jones, age 30, Oreese Stevenson, age 25, both of Baltimore, and Robert Baker, the father of Howard and Raeshio Rice, age 57, of Baltimore, Maryland – were charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute heroin.

The indictment also seeks forfeiture of \$27 million in criminal proceeds and lists numerous assets to be forfeited, including homes and luxury vehicles.

United States Attorney Allen F. Loucks said, “This prosecution is the result of a partnership between federal and local law enforcement as part of our combined effort to address the problem of drug-related violence in Baltimore City. This indictment represents the third time in the past three years that the United States Attorney’s Office has used the RICO statute to prosecute violent drug organizations in Baltimore City. These RICO indictments demonstrate our determination to use all of the legal tools at our disposal to dismantle such organizations.”

Six defendants were taken into custody today as part of a sweeping DEA-Baltimore City Police Department operation that included the execution of search warrants at 10 locations in Baltimore City, Baltimore County and the surrounding area. Three of the defendants are in state

custody and will be transferred to federal custody to face the charges in this indictment. Three other defendants are already in federal custody.

The maximum penalty for the RICO and narcotics conspiracy charges is life in prison. The narcotics conspiracy charges also carry a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment. Howard Rice, Raeshio Rice, and Eric Hall each face a maximum possible penalty of death for the murders of Green and Nutter.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of a joint investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Baltimore City Police Department, the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation Division, the State's Attorney's Office for Baltimore City and the United States Attorney's Office. We would also like to thank the United States Attorney's Offices for the Central District of California and the Southern District of New York, as well as the Drug Enforcement Administration's New York and Los Angeles offices, and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Los Angeles office for their assistance.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Steven H. Levin and Jason M. Weinstein.