



# Department of Justice

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## **FOUR DEFENDANTS INDICTED FOR GANG-RELATED VIOLENT CRIMES IN HENRY COUNTY**

### ***Henry County Police & ATF Work with "CAGE" Anti-Gang Unit To Investigate Gang Activity in Henry County***

Atlanta, GA - CHRISTOPHER LEAPHART, 19, of Hampton, Georgia, RYAN DAVIS-FIELDS, 20, of Stockbridge, Georgia, WILLIAM MELVIN CARTER II, 20, of Stockbridge, Georgia, and NICHOLAS LASHAE WILLIAMS, 19, of Forsyth, Georgia, have been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of robbery and using a firearm during the commission of a violent crime.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "This indictment and ongoing investigations in Henry County are a reminder that gang activity is not limited to large urban areas; violent gangs are unfortunately operating in suburban and rural areas as well. The criminal gang activity in Henry County has terrorized a number of victims, and may surprise some local citizens, who thought they were far away from such crime. In recent years, we have seen a number of loosely organized attempts to establish gang presence in many parts of North Georgia. Along with our local, state and federal law enforcement partners, we will continue to put such organizers in federal prison, where there is no parole."

"ATF is indeed part of the law enforcement response to combating gangs and gun-related violence in Henry County and across the nation," said Special Agent in Charge Greg Gant of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Atlanta Field Division. "When criminals threaten public safety by committing acts of violence on innocent citizens, they should be aware that federal prison can be a very real consequence of those actions."

Henry County Police Chief Russell Abernathy said of today's federal action, "I'm extremely pleased with this indictment. We have a tremendous partnership with the ATF, and will continue to work closely with them. I hope that this federal indictment sends a clear message—we will not tolerate gang violence in Henry County."

According to Nahmias, the indictment and other public record documents previously released in Henry County: On or about September 12, 2007, LEAPHART and CARTER, with the help of an unindicted juvenile co-conspirator identified as "T.I.H.," allegedly robbed the Dollar Tree store, located at 1548 Hudson Bridge Road, in Stockbridge. According to Henry County Police public records, a store manager was severely beaten in the robbery. On September 21, 2007, LEAPHART, CARTER, DAVIS-FIELDS, WILLIAMS, and the juvenile allegedly robbed a BP gas station located at 3311 Jodeco Road, in Stockbridge, and used a firearm during the commission of the crime. On October 4, 2007, LEAPHART, CARTER, DAVIS-FIELDS, and WILLIAMS allegedly again robbed the same Dollar Tree, on Hudson Bridge Road, again using a firearm. Subsequent investigation by a joint gang task force called the Criminal Apprehension Gang Enforcement (CAGE) Unit, comprised of Henry County Police and ATF Special Agents, determined that the robberies were gang-related and that the four defendants and the juvenile allegedly committed the violent robberies as part of gang activity. Henry County has charged the defendants with related crimes and all are currently being held in jail on those charges. They are expected to make an initial appearance on the federal charges later this week.

The defendants face a maximum possible sentence of 20 years in federal prison for the robberies, and a possible maximum sentence of life in prison for the offense of using the weapon in the armed robberies.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

Anyone with information on related gang crimes or activity in Henry County is asked to call the Henry County Police and the CAGE Unit at its 24-hour tip line. The number is (770) 288-8305.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the Henry County Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Joseph Plummer is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).