



**U. S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney*  
**George E. B. Holding**

*Eastern District of North Carolina*

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**TUESDAY - June 17, 2008**

**WARSAW MAN SENTENCED FOR INVOLVEMENT IN DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION**

**RALEIGH** - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that in federal court yesterday United States District Judge Terrence W. Boyle sentenced **ANTHONY MORRIS, JR.**, 28, of Warsaw, North Carolina, to 180 months' imprisonment.

A Criminal Information was filed on August 22, 2006 and on January 7, 2008, **MORRIS** pled guilty to conspiring to distribute and possession with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and more than five kilograms of cocaine base and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

This case was part of a three-year Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) multi-jurisdictional firearms, narcotics and money laundering investigation entitled *Maple Leaf*, that primarily targeted a Honduran and Mexican organization. The investigation revealed that the organization smuggled large quantities of cocaine and marijuana across the southwestern border to the Eastern District of North Carolina. It then smuggled firearms and U.S. currency back to Honduras and Mexico to arm and support its members as well as other violent criminal gangs in

Central America. It was also determined that the organization had connections to the Honduran Mafia, the Zetas and the Zapatistas (National Liberation Army in Mexico).

Operation *Maple Leaf* included fourteen federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies from two regions, four districts and four states. As a result of this investigation, 60 individuals were prosecuted on federal and state firearms and narcotics charges, including the organization's leaders Antelmo B. Contreras and Santos Horacio Zavala-Leiva. Significant drug, firearms and money seizures were achieved during this investigation, including; 25 kilograms of cocaine and crack, 1 pound of crystal methamphetamine, 700 pounds of marijuana, \$100,000.00 dollars in U.S. currency, 94 firearms, 3 residences, 14 vehicles, and thousands of dollars worth of personal property.

Mr. Holding commended the diligence and teamwork involved in this investigation, stating, "***This is what we can do when agencies, at all levels and in various locations, cooperate and work together with one another. Significant amounts of drugs and weapons have been taken off the streets and the people responsible for this illegal activity will be behind bars for a long time.***"

Investigation of the case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Wilmington and the

Sheriff's Offices from Duplin and Pender Counties. Assistant United States Attorney Ethan Ontjes served as prosecutor for the government.

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