



## San Gabriel Valley Gang Task Force Operation

06/02/2012

### Federal Criminal Cases Target Narcotics Trafficking Related to Pasadena Denver Lane Bloods Street Gang

LOS ANGELES – An investigation by the San Gabriel Valley Safe Streets Task Force today resulted in the arrest of eight defendants who face federal narcotics trafficking charges. The investigation, which initially focused on drug sales by members and associates of the Pasadena Denver Lane Bloods street gang, also led to the arrest of seven defendants on state charges.

The 15 arrests this morning culminate an 18-month investigation during which dozens of other defendants were arrested on various narcotics and weapons offenses. During the investigation, authorities seized eight firearms, approximately \$40,000 in cash, five kilograms of cocaine and approximately 2½ kilograms of crack cocaine.

The federal part of the investigation led to two indictments and one criminal complaint that name a total of nine defendants, one of whom is a fugitive. Most of the defendants face potential life sentences if they are convicted.

The investigation that led to today's arrests was conducted under the aegis of the San Gabriel Valley Safe Streets Task Force, which is made up of agents and officers with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Pasadena Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Altadena gang detectives and the Community Oriented Policing Services Bureau), the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

"Gang members and drug traffickers are united by the common denominator of greed," said United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. "Today's arrests demonstrate again that the Justice Department is committed to working together with its state and local law

enforcement partners to protect our communities from the menace of the illegal narcotics trade.”

Steven Martinez, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s Los Angeles Field Office, stated: “Today’s arrests are the result of a long-term investigation by the joint task force that targeted gang members and associates alleged to be the driving force behind a drug distribution ring operating in the Pasadena area that’s had a toxic effect on the community. There is no doubt that street gangs corrupt youth and that their drug networks fuel a variety of violent crimes in the communities in which they operate, as a result of monetary disputes, gang rivalries and incidents associated with addiction.”

One grand jury indictment unsealed this morning charges seven defendants.

They are:

- Jesse Vargas, 34, of El Monte;
- Jesus Campos, 43, of La Puente;
- Monte Russell, also known as “Godfather,” 35, of Pomona and Pasadena;
- Cuong Nguyen, also known as “David Thai,” 32, of Mid-City Los Angeles, who authorities are continuing to search for;
- Dayna Guyton, 29, of Pasadena;
- Myoshi Smith, 23, of Bellflower; and
- Lyonel Washington, also known as “Dough,” 33, of Altadena.

Among the specific charges in the indictment are allegations that Vargas on just one day possessed approximately three pounds of cocaine. The other two defendants charged in federal court are:

- Keno Monteze Norris, 33, of Pasadena, who is charged in an indictment with distributing crack cocaine; and
- John Eugene Brown, 48, of Pasadena, who is charged in a criminal complaint with possession with the intent to distribute crack cocaine.

The eight defendants arrested today on federal charges are expected to make their initial court appearances this afternoon in United States District Court in downtown Los Angeles.

Indictments and criminal complaints only contain allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty in court.

The Burbank Police Department and the Monterey Park Police Department provided support during today's operation.

The investigation that resulted in today's arrests started only weeks after two grand jury indictments targeting the Denver Lane Bloods and the gang's drug trafficking in the Antelope Valley were unsealed (see: #L#

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/cac/Pressroom/pr2010/118.html> #/L#

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