

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Four members of the Woodpile criminal street gang sentenced to prison
State vs. Jeffrey Kreiger, James McKinzie, Ethan Petty, and Collin Zinicola

October 26, 2022 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that co-defendants Jeffrey Lee Kreiger, James Alton McKinzie, Ethan Charles Bradley Petty, and Collin Christopher Zinicola have entered pleas and admitted to taking part in a 2021 gang-related incident involving firearms and making terroristic threats.

On June 30, 2021, Cherokee Sheriff's Office responded to a 911 call reporting that four men were outside a Canton residence waving guns and arguing with a man. Before law enforcement arrived, the four men left the scene in a black Mustang, which was stopped by police a short while later. Inside the vehicle, law enforcement found three pistols, two rifles, ammunition, and other gang-related items.

During the investigation, law enforcement determined that the men, later identified as associates of Woodpile, a criminal street gang, went to the home of an associate from another street gang known as Crips to confront him about territorial issues and displaying of gang colors.

“Gangs often use certain colors, symbols or hand gestures to identify themselves and their territory. Here, these defendants carried weapons as they were prepared to fight and defend their use of the color blue to represent the Woodpile gang,” said Assistant District Attorney Kelly Chavis, who prosecuted the case on behalf of the State. “This attempt to intimidate a rival gang member had the potential to injure innocent bystanders with a gunfight on a residential street.”

The four men entered negotiated guilty pleas on different dates, admitting to violation of Street Gang Terrorism and Prevention Act, criminal attempt to commit a felony, terrorist threats, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. They also admitted to being associates of the Woodpile gang.

Kreiger, 23, of Jasper, was sentenced on October 12, 2022, to 15 years with the first three years to serve in the state penal system. Zinicola, 19, of Canton, was sentenced on May 20, 2022, to 15 years with the first two years to serve in the state penal system.

McKinzie, 21, of Canton, was sentenced on May 9, 2022, to 15 years with the first five years to serve in custody in the state penal system. He pled guilty to an additional charge of possession a firearm by a first offender probationer. Petty, 20, of Canton, was sentenced on March 14, 2022, to 15 years with the first two years to serve in custody in the state penal system.

While on probation, the defendants are forbidden to have contact with each other and any member or affiliate of any criminal street gang. They must perform 200 hours of community service, receive substance abuse evaluation and treatment, not possess firearms, and adhere to other conditions of probation.

“In Cherokee County, our law enforcement agencies and our courts are tough on gangs. Criminal street gangs are dangerous and must be stopped,” said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “Every arrest and conviction means one less gang member is on our streets committing violent acts and putting our citizens in danger.”

The Cherokee Sheriff’s Office, with assistance from the Canton Police Department, investigated this case, which was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kelly Chavis, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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