

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Guilty Convictions for 16 Defendants in Case Involving Murder, Drugs, Armed Robbery,
Racketeering, and Gangs – Final Defendant Pleads Guilty on February 22**
State vs. Kevin Saucedo, et al.

February 23, 2024 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that a gang case involving murder, drugs, armed robbery, and racketeering has closed with the remaining co-defendant entering a guilty plea yesterday and being sentenced for his part in these crimes. Eight other co-defendants previously pled guilty, and a Cherokee County jury convicted seven co-defendants last fall. Specifics of each co-defendant’s charges and sentences are listed at the end of this press release.

The Cherokee Sheriff’s Office first became aware of these criminal activities on June 26, 2020, after responding to a 911 call reporting a person shot near the Hamilton Inn hotel on Wade Green Road in Acworth. The shooting victim was Jon-David Russel Johnson, 41, of Newnan, who died after being transported to the hospital.

Detectives determined that multiple individuals were involved in the murder. Together, these individuals committed crimes to support a complex drug trafficking organization that utilized a prison broker system linked to drug cartels. This criminal enterprise was composed of associates from two street gangs – Sureños (SUR 13) and Ghost Face Gangsters.

Events leading up to the murder began on June 13, 2020, when Eric Joseph Neal and Krystal Dianna Campbell sold counterfeit methamphetamine to Kala Leann Kenny. Campbell then set up a replacement buy, which Kenny stole in retaliation.

In response to Kenny’s actions, the criminal enterprise worked together to locate Kenny for the purpose of committing armed robbery. They assembled a group of Sureños gang members. The leader of the group, Kevin Saucedo, shot Johnson, who was with Kenny during the drug transactions and at Hamilton Inn.

“While only one person pulled the trigger, every single defendant in this case was involved in murder, from those on the hit crew, to those who conducted surveillance, to those who provided the weapons. And one defendant put the entire enterprise in motion when she demanded vengeance,” said Assistant District Attorney Kelly Chavis, of the Gang/Organized Crime Unit. “Gang members abide by a code that says retaliation, even murder, is acceptable, and in many cases expected. As a society, we must hold gang members accountable and seek justice for the protection of our community.”

The jury trial took place from September 27 through October 13, 2023. After deliberating for four days, the jury convicted Saucedo of felony murder and other charges. The remaining seven co-defendants were found guilty of charges including criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, violation of the Street Gang Act, violation of RICO Act, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony.

“This verdict is a testament to the efforts of both our local and state law enforcement agencies. The Cherokee Sheriff’s Office pursued every possible avenue to bring about justice. The GBI Gang Task Force and the Georgia Department of Corrections also played a vital role in uncovering drug trafficking within the state prison system,” said Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Damion Overstreet, of the Gang/Organized Crime Unit. “As a result of this collaboration, these criminals will spend substantial time behind bars, keeping our streets safer.”

At the sentencing hearing on November 3, 2023, a member of the victim's family spoke fondly of Jon-David Russel Johnson and asked the court to impose the strictest punishment possible. Chief Superior Court Judge Ellen McElyea then listened to arguments from the State and Defense, before sentencing each defendant.

“Drug trafficking organizations and criminal street gangs do nothing but cause destruction and lead to violence – in this case, murder. For this reason, Cherokee County will continue to prosecute these cases to the full extent of the law,” said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “Utilization of the RICO statute in a case of this manner represents the most strategic and effective means to dismantle gangs in Georgia.”

This case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Damion Overstreet and Assistant District Attorney Kelly Chavis, of the Gang/Organized Crime Unit, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

Sentences of Defendants Found Guilty by Jury

All defendants must follow standard conditions of probation, including no contact of any kind with the victim's family. Individuals convicted of violation of the Street Gang Act are also forbidden to have contact with any member or associate of a criminal street gang and may not participate in any criminal gang activity.

Jeremiah Glenn Barber, 42, Trion, incarcerated at time of crimes, was convicted of criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, and violation of the RICO Act. He was sentenced to 30 years, with the first 15 years in prison and the remainder on probation. Since Barber was sentenced as a recidivist offender pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 17-10-7(c), he will be required to serve the entire prison portion of his sentence without parole eligibility.

Edgar Camacho-Cruz, 23, Lawrenceville, was convicted of criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, violation of Street Gang Act (2 counts), conspiracy to commit robbery, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced to 20 years, with the first 8 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Krystal Dianna Campbell, 34, Gordon County, was convicted of criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, and violation of RICO Act. She was sentenced to 30 years, with the first 10 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Francisco Javier De La Cruz, 28, Roswell, incarcerated at time of crimes, was convicted of criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, violation of Street Gang Act (4 counts), conspiracy to commit robbery, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced to 30 years, with the first 8 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Jose Lara Jimenez, 33, metro Atlanta, incarcerated at time of crimes, was convicted of criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, violation of Street Gang Act (3 counts), conspiracy to commit robbery, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced to 50 years, with the first 20 years in prison and the remainder on probation. Since Jimenez was sentenced as a recidivist pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 17-10-7(c), he will be required to serve the entire prison portion of his sentence without parole eligibility.

Kevin Saucedo, 25, Alpharetta, was convicted of felony murder (3 counts), violation of Street Gang Act (9 counts), criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, conspiracy to commit robbery, aggravated assault, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced to life, plus five years in prison.

David Solano, 23, Roswell, was convicted of criminal attempt to commit armed robbery, violation of Street Gang Act (4 counts), conspiracy to commit robbery, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony (2 counts). He was sentenced to 35 years, with the first 20 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Negotiated Guilty Pleas Entered Prior to Trial

All defendants must follow standard conditions of probation, including no contact of any kind with the victim's family. Individuals convicted of violation of the Street Gang Act are also forbidden to have contact with any member or associate of a criminal street gang and may not participate in any criminal gang activity.

Jordan Emilo Arias-Espinoza, 25, Peachtree Corners, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery, violation of Street Gang Act, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced on February 10, 2023, to 20 years with the first 10 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Josue David Escobar, 25, Roswell, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery, violation of Street Gang Act, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced on June 14, 2023, to 20 years with the first 8 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Jose Daniel Gasca-Solis, 21, Norcross, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit a robbery, violation of Street Gang Act, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced on August 18, 2023, to 30 years with the first 20 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Jason Brian Graves, 39, Gainesville, pled guilty to violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced on March 15, 2023, to 20 years with the first 3 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Kala Leeann Kenny aka Kala Leeann McClure, 40, Paulding County, pled guilty to trafficking methamphetamine and violation of RICO Act. She was sentenced on August 16, 2022, to 20 years with the first 10 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Shene Lucretia Kirk, 37, LaFayette, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery and violation of RICO Act. She was sentenced on March 17, 2023, to 20 years, with the first 8 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Katelyn Nicole Middlebrooks, 29, LaFayette, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery and violation of RICO Act. She was sentenced on February 9, 2023, to 20 years, with the first 8 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Gilbert Alexander Rodriguez, 21, Norcross, pled guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery, violation of Street Gang Act, and violation of RICO Act. He was sentenced on August 25, 2023, to 30 years, with the first 20 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

Negotiated Guilty Plea Entered Following the Trial

The following defendant must follow standard conditions of probation, including no contact of any kind with the victim's family.

Eric Joseph Neal, 38, FCI Coleman Medium, Federal Correctional Institution, Florida, incarcerated at time of crime, pled guilty to violation of RICO Act during a video conference plea hearing on February 22, 2024. He was sentenced to serve three years to serve in prison.

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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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