

Clinton NC Drug Kingpin Sentenced To 30 Years In Federal Prison

By Administrator

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United States District Judge James C. Dever, III sentenced Tony Chevallier, 40, from Clinton, North Carolina, to 360 months in prison, to be followed by 10 years of Federal Supervised Release. CHEVALLIER was part of a regional drug trafficking organization (DTO) that was rooted in Sampson County, North Carolina, but operated throughout the Southeastern United States. In October, 2016, CHEVALLIER and twenty-four other co-defendants were federally indicted and charged with a myriad of drug trafficking, firearm and financial crimes rooted within the DTO. CHEVALLIER was charged with Conspiring to Distribute and Possess with the Intent to Distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine – the most severe drug charge one can receive at the federal level.

Of the twenty-five co-defendants named in the indictment, four entered pleas of not guilty and proceeded to a jury trial in May, 2018. After nearly two weeks of evidence presentation that included multiple community witnesses, local and federal law enforcement testimony, forensic, financial and narcotic experts, testimony from co-defendants, and a myriad of other evidentiary sources, the jury found CHEVALLIER and his codefendants guilty of the crimes charged.

At sentencing, CHEVALLIER moved the Court for leniency, arguing for a low-end sentence through contesting estimated drug quantities associated with CHEVALLIER's drug trafficking activity and the leadership CHEVALLIER maintained throughout the conspiracy. The Court ultimately agreed with the United States, relying upon the extensive criminal history built by CHEVALLIER and the deluge of evidence implicating him in what was described as one of the most significant DTO's the Court has ever seen. The Court cited the dozens of previous convictions ranging from violent crimes, property crimes, and drug

trafficking crimes when fashioning the imposed sentence. The Court further credited witnesses who came forward to assist in the prosecution of CHEVALLIER, whose information assisted law enforcement in better understanding the regional nature in which CHEVALLIER operated. By the end of the investigation, it was determined that CHEVALLIER trafficked large quantities of drugs throughout North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Highlighting the commitment to criminal activity as demonstrated by CHEVALLIER, the Court noted one example, citing that CHEVALLIER was released from prison in Georgia on February 20, 2016 after being convicted of a Felony Cocaine Trafficking charge in November, 2013. Evidence gathered in this current case showed CHEVALLIER returned immediately to large scale drug trafficking upon his release from custody until he was arrested federally in late 2016.

The investigation relied on multiple agencies and offices at both the federal and state levels. Initially, the investigation into this DTO began with the Sampson County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Division. As the scale of this DTO became clearer, other state and federal agencies joined the investigation, including the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office, Onslow County Sheriff's Office, Jacksonville Police Department, the North Carolina Highway Patrol, the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), all assuming various roles throughout the multi-year investigation. Ultimately, the investigation was primarily led by ATF, the Sampson County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Division, and the Sampson County Sheriff's Office Criminal Interdiction Unit.

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The investigation utilized confidential informants, undercover officers, constant physical surveillance, a Title III wiretap and a myriad of other investigative techniques to uncover the depth and breadth of crimes furthered by the DTO. The investigation determined that CHEVALLIER was ultimately accountable for the distribution of significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, and cocaine base (crack).

This prosecution is part of an extensive investigation by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). OCDETF is a joint federal, state, and local cooperative approach to combat drug trafficking and is the nation's primary tool for disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations, targeting national and regional level drug trafficking organizations, and coordinating the necessary law enforcement entities and resources to disrupt or dismantle the targeted criminal organization and seize their assets. Assistant United States Attorneys Brad Knott and Toby Lathan prosecuted the case on behalf of the United States.