



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois*

*Patrick J. Fitzgerald
United States Attorney*

*Federal Building
219 South Dearborn Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604
(312) 353-5300*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY MAY 2, 2007
www.usdoj.gov/usao/iln

PRESS CONTACTS:
AUSA Rachel Cannon (312) 353-5357
AUSA/PIO Randall Samborn (312) 353-5318

**ALLEGED LONGTIME GANGSTER DISCIPLES LEADER VICTOR THOMPSON
AND SEVEN OTHERS CHARGED IN FEDERAL CRACK COCAINE CONSPIRACY**

CHICAGO – A Drug Enforcement Administration and Chicago Police Department joint investigation resulted today in the arrest of **Victor Thompson**, allegedly a longtime high-ranking member of the Gangster Disciples street gang, and several co-defendants on federal charges of conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine in the West Pullman neighborhood on the city’s south side. Thompson and his “God son,” **Shawn Denton**, allegedly controlled a high-volume crack cocaine distribution organization and enforced their authority through violence, thefts and robberies, according to federal law enforcement officials.

Undercover Chicago police officers posing as drug customers and a cooperating source made approximately 30 controlled purchases of crack cocaine from alleged members of the Thompson organization during the investigation, which ended when DEA agents and police began executing four federal search warrants and arresting defendants last night and early today. Eight defendants, including Thompson, were charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine in a federal criminal complaint that was unsealed today, announced, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Gary G. Olenkiewicz, Special

Agent in Charge of the DEA Chicago Field Division; and Philip J. Cline, Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department. The investigation was conducted through the federal High Intensity Drug-Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force and the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). A ninth individual, who was arrested today, is facing state charges.

At noon today, Thompson, also known as “Vic,” and “Old Man,” 46, of Chicago; Denton, 28, of East Chicago, Ind., and three other defendants were in custody. Agents and officers seized several guns, suspected narcotics and suspected records of drug-trafficking activity during the searches and arrests. The defendants were scheduled to appear at 11 a.m. Thursday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Martin Ashman in U.S. District Court.

“Our citizens deserve to live without the fear of gang violence and drug trafficking in their neighborhoods,” Mr. Olenkiewicz said. “The arrest of Gangster Disciple Victor Thompson and his co-conspirators puts Chicago gang members on notice that we will not tolerate their illegal activities. This investigation was successful due to the cooperative law enforcement efforts between the DEA, Chicago Police Department, Cook County Sheriff’s Office and the United States Attorney’s Office. We are all committed to putting gangs out of business and making our communities safe.”

According to the complaint affidavit, the DEA and CPD obtained information from various sources that Thompson has been reported to be a “Board Member” in the Gangster Disciples hierarchy, and allegedly controls a crack cocaine trafficking organization that includes fellow Gangster Disciples as well as non-gang members near the area of 116th and Stewart streets on the south side. When the Gangster Disciples longtime chairman Larry Hoover and more three dozen other high-ranking gang leaders were charged with running a \$100 million drug distribution empire, a chart recovered in 1995 and later introduced at Hoover’s trial set out the entire hierarchy of the

Gangster Disciples organization at the time. It listed “Vic” (Victor Thompson) as a “regent” for the area between 95th and 107th streets and Vincennes and Eggleston streets, and his “count” (the number of members he controlled) was 200, according to the affidavit unsealed today.

The complaint states that Bernard Ellis, an alleged Gangster Disciples member arrested in 2005, was recorded by law enforcement agents discussing Thompson’s drug-trafficking organization. Ellis described how Thompson allegedly extorted local drug dealers by charging them “street taxes” to deal drugs in his area, and further disclosed that Thompson used a system of informants to report how much local drug dealers were making through drug sales. The extortion system was enforced through alleged torture and violence, according to Ellis’s recorded statements.

The charges allege that Thompson and Denton’s co-defendants serve various roles in assisting them operate the drug conspiracy. For example, alleged co-conspirators supply them with cocaine, serve as lookouts for police, direct them to various customers, store cocaine, sell crack cocaine and make crack cocaine. Defendants **Herbert Taylor**, aka “Herb,” “Heard” and “Gigga Man,” 48, and **Ondray McKnight**, aka “Tricky” and “Cash,” 35, allegedly supplied cocaine to the organization. In addition, Taylor allegedly conspired in intercepted telephone conversations with Denton and Thompson to rob individuals of drugs and/or money, while McKnight also sold crack for the organization. Defendants **Darryl Edwards** (arrested), aka “Top Flite” and “Flite,” 41; **Andre Sparkman** (arrested), aka “Dre,” 44, and **Millard Morrow**, aka “Millie,” 34, allegedly sold crack cocaine for the organization, and undercover officers made buys from all three. Defendant **Caroline Sparkman**, aka “Dina,” 40, allegedly served as a lookout for the organization and stored drugs for the group at her home.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rachel Cannon.

If convicted, each defendant faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison and a maximum of life imprisonment without parole and a maximum fine of \$4 million. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

###