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THREE MEN FROM "OPERATION POISON CONTROL" DRUG TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATION INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY



NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Jan. 14, 2019) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania William M. McSwain announced today that David Cooper, 44, of Muhlenberg Township, Pa.; Christopher Saunders, 26, of Pottstown, Pa.; and Edwin Andino, 36, of Allentown, Pa. were charged by federal indictment for trafficking illegal drugs in Montgomery, Lehigh, Lancaster and Berks Counties, and for the unlawful possession of firearms.

“When we arrested these defendants and their associates last June, we dismantled a significant drug trafficking organization that was a major source of fentanyl and cocaine in Montgomery County and Southeastern Pennsylvania. They were dealing in death and fueling the addictions and overdoses that have affected so many people in the region,” said DA Steele. “Our law enforcement partners on the federal level will now take over the prosecution of Cooper, Saunders and Andino to make sure that they won’t be back on the streets peddling their poison anytime soon.”

Defendants Cooper and Andino were charged by federal indictment with conspiracy to distribute fentanyl, cocaine, and cocaine base; possession with intent to distribute crack, fentanyl, and cocaine; possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking; and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Defendant Saunders was also charged with participating in the narcotics-trafficking conspiracy.

“This case is an excellent example of the how collaboration between federal, state, and local law enforcement safeguards public safety. I commend the agents and police officers who investigated this case for their cooperation and diligence, and I thank the Montgomery County District Attorney’s Office and District Attorney Steele for leading the charge to take down this deadly drug trafficking ring,” said U.S. Attorney McSwain.

Cooper, Saunders and Andino were originally arrested and charged in Montgomery County in June 2018, following the multi-agency “Operation Poison Control” wiretap investigation, which ran from May 18, 2018 to June 1, 2018. Co-defendant Miguel Figueroa Jr., one of the other leaders of this drug trafficking organization, plead guilty on Dec. 19, 2018, in the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas to multiple felony drug counts as well as to being one of the leaders of this corrupt organization. He was sentenced to 18 to 40 years in a state correction institution.

“Operation Poison Control” involved the use of electronic surveillance, visual surveillance, fixed surveillance, search warrants, court orders, controlled drug buys, nine confidential informants, and tips from three concerned citizens. At the end of the investigation, law enforcement teams moved in and made more than 20 arrests, including an arrest of Cooper while he was receiving a large fentanyl delivery. The fentanyl was concealed in a disguised, aftermarket compartment in a Honda Odyssey, which law enforcement concealment experts were later able to locate and open.

The investigation was led by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau’s Violent Crime Unit and Narcotics Enforcement Team and involved the

Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General's Bureau of Narcotics Investigation; FBI Bucks and Montgomery County Safe Streets Task Force; Pottstown Borough Police Department; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Pennsylvania State Police; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Berks County District Attorney's Narcotics Enforcement Team; Lehigh County Detective Bureau; Reading City Police Department; Allentown Police Department; Muhlenberg Township Police Department; and the Liberty Mid-Atlantic HIDTA.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.