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### **MULTI-STATE CRYSTAL METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION SHUTDOWN; FIVE RINGLEADERS ARRESTED**



Brian J. Holt



Lorraine Y. Zeno

[Criminal Complaint](#) (PDF Format)

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Jan. 17, 2018)—Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Bucks County District Attorney Matthew Weintraub, United States Postal Inspection Services' Philadelphia Division Inspector-In-Charge Daniel Brubaker, FBI Bucks and Montgomery Safe Streets Task Force, and other federal, state and local law enforcement officials announce the dismantling of a multi-state drug trafficking organization that used the U.S. Postal Service to mail packages of crystal methamphetamine and marijuana from California to traffickers in Montgomery County dating back to at least April 2016 and the arrests of five leaders who spearheaded the corrupt organization. Through the course of the investigation, law enforcement identified what they believed to be more than 350 pounds of illegal crystal methamphetamine and marijuana sent in multiple shipments.

Two leaders were arrested in Pennsylvania: Lorraine Y. Zeno, 36, and Brian J. Holt, 42, both of Ambler, Pa.; and three in California: Leonardo Christian Fernandez, 34, of Monrovia, Calif.; Joel Travis Hills-Garcia, 29, of Santa Clarita, Calif.; and Patrick M. Fry, 43, of Saugus, Calif.

Together, these suspects were known during the investigation as “The Big Five.”

The arrests were the result of a multi-agency investigation involving:

- Montgomery County Detective Bureau Narcotics Enforcement Team
- United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)
- FBI Bucks and Montgomery Safe Streets Task Force
- Upper Dublin Township Police Department
- Bucks County District Attorney’s Office Detectives Drug Strike Task Force
- Drug Enforcement Administration (Philadelphia Division)
- Philadelphia-Camden High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)
- Philadelphia Police Narcotics Unit—IDIS
- New Jersey State Police
- Little Egg Harbor Township Police Department
- Pennsylvania State Police Eastern Interdiction Unit
- Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Intelligence Center (PACIC)
- Middle Atlantic-Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network (MAGLOCLN).

“Through the joint efforts of multiple law enforcement agencies, we were able to shut down a significant drug trafficking organization that was operating in Southeastern Pennsylvania and work our way back to their suppliers in California,” said Steele. “This investigation again illustrates that law enforcement is united in our fight against deadly drugs of all kinds—heroin, opioids, fentanyl, methamphetamine, and pills. All of this poison is killing residents of Montgomery County and other communities in the region, and those that traffic this poison need to realize it’s not worth it because we are going to keep investigating, arresting and holding accountable those responsible.”

These arrests were the culmination of a lengthy joint investigation of this corrupt organization. The investigation began when the U.S. Postal Inspection Service identified a suspicious Express Mail parcel shipped from California to Montgomery County, Pa. With the authority of a federal search and seizure warrant, the USPIS discovered that the parcel contained approximately one pound of crystal methamphetamine. The joint investigation was launched soon after and ultimately found the cross-country shipments of bulk quantities of crystal methamphetamine and marijuana to members of the Zeno-Holt corrupt drug trafficking organization. Investigators learned that the shipments received were then sold to other drug dealers and individuals across Montgomery and Bucks counties and Philadelphia. From Southeastern Pennsylvania, this corrupt organization headed by Zeno and Holt, sent illegal proceeds for the shipments of crystal methamphetamine and marijuana to Fernandez, Hills-Garcia, Fry and others in California. At times, they also personally delivered illegal proceeds.

Court-authorized wiretaps on the cellular phones of Zeno, Holt and Fernandez provided evidence to Montgomery County detectives and other participating law enforcement agencies to identify the sources of supply in California. Investigators also learned the identities of Zeno and Holt's crystal methamphetamine customers, many of whom were distributors of crystal methamphetamine themselves.

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service first identified the suspicious packages to begin this investigation. "For over 200 years, the Postal Inspection Service has protected America's employees, facilities and customers. This case exemplifies our ongoing commitment to eliminating from the mail stream the illegal narcotics that poison our youth and devastate our community. Our objective was to identify this drug trafficking organization, both here and at its source in California, and completely dismantle it," said Brubaker. "We accomplished our objective. Our collective success today is indicative of the collaborative relationship between all levels of law enforcement in the Delaware Valley and should be celebrated."

The Bucks County District Attorney's Office and Detective Bureau were an integral part of the investigative team. Bucks County District Attorney Matt Weintraub said, "Once we arrested Holt, we assisted many other law enforcement agencies in holding 'The Big Five' and their nationwide narco-trafficking organization criminally accountable. This was a great team effort by law enforcement. Bottom line: crystal meth, marijuana and the mail don't mix."

Jeremiah A. Daley, executive director of the Philadelphia-Camden HIDTA, said there has been an increase of methamphetamine trafficking regionally in the last two or three years. "While we have collectively prioritized combatting the 'opioid epidemic' in our region and our nation, we cannot overlook other pernicious controlled substance threats and allow traffickers of crystal methamphetamines to go unchecked. As this case clearly illustrates, meth is a significant threat to people in our communities; we are very grateful to the combined local, state and federal law enforcement agencies who doggedly pursued this criminal enterprise across the continent."

In Montgomery County, Steele noted that there has been a significant increase in both methamphetamine drug trafficking as well as deaths caused by the drug. Eight overdose deaths from methamphetamine were recorded in all of 2016 by the Montgomery County Coroner's Office. According to the latest coroner's report, 19 overdose deaths were caused by methamphetamines in the first three-quarters alone of 2017 (through Sept. 30, 2017)—a 316 percent increase over 2016.

"Meth is making a resurgence. We are seeing an upswing in methamphetamine dealing, usage and overdose deaths here in Montgomery County, which mirrors the rest of the country," said Steele. "Meth is deadly and cheap. And it is flowing into Montgomery County from California, in this case using the U.S. Postal Service and other carriers. Drug traffickers make the false assumption that using the mail or hiding drugs in car batteries will keep them safe from detection. They are wrong. And we are on to them."

Zeno was initially arrested on Possession with Intent to Deliver charges on Nov. 8, 2017, and has been in the Montgomery County Correctional Facility after failing to post bail of \$500,000. Holt was initially arrested in Bucks County on Nov. 8, 2017, on felony firearms charges. He failed to post bail of \$10,000 and has been in the Bucks County Correctional Facility since.

Additional charges against both Holt and Zeno were filed on Jan. 10, 2018, including Corrupt Organizations, Possession with the Intent to Deliver, Dealing in the Proceeds of Unlawful Activities, Criminal Use of a Communication Facility and related charges. Holt also was charged with Person Not to Possess a Firearm. The defendants were arraigned before Magisterial District Judge Patricia Zaffarano, who set bail for each defendant at \$500,000 cash bail. They failed to post bail and were remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. Holt's preliminary hearing is scheduled for 12:45 p.m., Jan. 18, 2018, and Zeno's preliminary hearing is scheduled for 12:15 p.m., Jan. 29, 2018, both before Judge Zaffarano.

Fernandez, Fry and Hills-Garcia were arrested in California. They will be extradited to Montgomery County to face these charges. Fifteen additional people were arrested or are being sought by law enforcement in this case on charges ranging from possession to Possession with Intent to Deliver.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Robert J. Kolansky and Samantha L. Thompson.

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.