



Feb. 10, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

32 CHARGED IN GANG CONSPIRACY

Tacoma, WA -- Yesterday Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Lindquist charged 32 people as criminal conspirators in gang-related crimes occurring from December 2008 through January 2010. The Tacoma Police Department in conjunction with the South Sound Gang Task Force, an organization made up of local and federal law enforcement agencies, investigated this case. The Prosecutor's Office and law enforcement worked closely together on this large scale effort to reduce gang violence.

The 32 defendants are alleged to be members or associates of the Hilltop Crips. All are charged with Criminal Conspiracy in Count I for allegedly joining the gang knowing the gang exists for the purpose of making money through illegal means. In addition to the conspiracy charges, the defendants are charged with multiple other crimes, including Attempted Murder, Assault, Drive-By Shooting, Robbery, Burglary, Theft, Drug Dealing and Unlawful Possession of Firearms.

"This is a significant case because it is the first time in Washington the conspiracy statute has been used to prosecute gang violence on this scale," Lindquist said. "Our use of the conspiracy charge is modeled after successful gang prosecutions in other parts of the country. We have a new gang unit in the Prosecutor's Office and our gang prosecutors are committed to using bold and innovative methods to reduce gang violence in our community," he said.

These charges are only allegations. A person is presumed innocent unless and until he or she is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court.

Arraignments will commence at 9 a.m. on Feb. 10, in the County-City building. A press conference has been scheduled for this afternoon, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 3 p.m., at the Tacoma Police Department, 3701 S. Pine St., Tacoma.

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