



Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Brian J. Stretch
Northern District of California

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FEDERAL MURDER CHARGES UNVEILED IN 73-COUNT INDICTMENT AGAINST GANG MEMBERS

Superseding Indictment Includes Broad Range of Charges, Including Racketeering and Armed Bank Robbery

SAN JOSE – A 73-count superseding indictment was unsealed today charging nine defendants with racketeering, murder, attempted murder, armed bank robbery, robbery affecting interstate commerce, and the use of firearms, announced Acting United States Attorney Brian J. Stretch. The arrests followed an investigation referred to as “Operation Daybreak,” so named for the early morning attacks that characterized the alleged criminal activity in this case.

Eight of the defendants- Daniel Chavez, AKA Youngster (age 33); Victor Skates, AKA Demon (age 26); Eduardo Lebron, AKA Warlord (age 36); Eder Torres, AKA Flaco (age 29); Julian Ruiz, AKA JJ (age 26); Antonio Cruz (age 28); Terrell Golden, AKA G (age 24); and Anthony Lek (age 28) are alleged to be Salinas-based Norteño gang members, while the ninth defendant, Robert Loera (age 35), is alleged to be an associate of the gang. According to the superseding indictment, all nine defendants conspired to commit murder and other violent crimes as part of a criminal RICO enterprise tied to their Norteño gang activity. The superseding indictment alleges that, over a two year time period, the defendants committed 12 murders, seven attempted murders, and seven bank robberies.

With respect to the murders and attempted murders, the superseding indictment alleges that the defendants hunted for rival gang members and other enemies, and shot and killed them

and others suspected of being rival gang members. One of the homicides charged in the superseding indictment occurred on the campus of Alisal High School in Salinas, California.

“We greatly appreciate the tireless efforts of the Salinas Police Department in reducing violent crime in the Salinas Valley,” said U.S. Attorney Brian J. Stretch. “Operation Daybreak has been a critical part of exposing crime in the area. While there remains more work to be done, today’s indictment is the result of collective leadership of the Salinas Police Department, and the FBI.”

"This years-long investigation involved thousands of investigative hours by Salinas police detectives with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation,” said Chief Kelly J. McMillin of the Salinas Police Department. “This case demonstrates what we have known for many years; that very few individuals drive the majority of violence in Salinas. It should also serve to remind us all that the role of prevention and intervention efforts cannot be overlooked and in fact must be strengthened further to ensure other young men never think it's okay to shoot another. The Salinas Police Department would like to thank the people of the Office of the United States Attorney, Northern District of California, for their incredible dedication to bringing these individuals to justice."

As alleged in the superseding indictment, the armed bank robberies occurred in the cities of Salinas, Watsonville, and San Jose. In addition, there was an armed robbery of a Zales jewelry store in Gilroy.

All nine defendants have been charged with the crimes set forth in the first four counts of the superseding indictment:

- racketeering conspiracy, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1962(d);
- conspiracy to commit murder and assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1959;
- use of firearms in furtherance of crimes of violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c); and
- robbery and conspiracy to commit robbery affecting interstate commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a).

In addition, the following defendants have been charged with the following counts and additional crimes under the indictment:

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Counts in the Indictment</u>
Daniel Chavez a/k/a Youngster	Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(1) and 2 Use of Firearm Causing Murder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)	5-14, 21- 33, 46-48, 65-67, 71-73

	<p>Assault with a Dangerous Weapon in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(3) and 2</p> <p>Attempted Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(5) and 2</p> <p>Conspiracy to Commit Robbery Affecting Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1951(a) and 2</p> <p>Robbery and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery of Banks and Credit Unions, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2113(a) and (d), and 371</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p>	
Victor Skates a/k/a Demon	<p>Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(1) and 2</p> <p>Attempted Murder and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(3), (5) and 2</p> <p>Conspiracy to Commit Robbery Affecting Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a) and 2</p> <p>Robbery and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery of Banks and Credit Unions, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2113(a) and (d), and 2</p> <p>Use of Firearm Causing Murder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p>	5-17, 21-25, 29-34, 38-44, 46-55, 59-64, 68-70
Eduardo Lebron a/k/a Warlord	<p>Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(1)</p> <p>Attempted Murder and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(3), (5) and 2</p> <p>Use of Firearm Causing Murder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p>	35-37, 49-58

Eder Torres a/k/a Flaco	<p>Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(1)</p> <p>Attempted Murder and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(3), (5) and 2</p> <p>Use of Firearm Causing Murder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)</p> <p>Assault with a Dangerous Weapon in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(3) and 2</p> <p>Conspiracy to Commit Robbery Affecting Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a) and 2</p> <p>Robbery and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery of Banks and Credit Unions, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2113(a) and (d), and 371</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p>	5-7, 29-31, 65-67, 71-73
Julian Ruiz a/k/a JJ	Only charges in counts 1-4	Only counts 1-4
Antonio Cruz	<p>Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(1)</p> <p>Use of Firearm Causing Murder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)</p> <p>Conspiracy to Commit Robbery Affecting Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a) and 2</p> <p>Robbery and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery of Banks and Credit Unions, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2113(a) and (d), and 371</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p>	5-7, 18-20, 24-28, 59-64, 68-70
Terrell Golden a/k/a G	<p>Murder in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(1)</p> <p>Use of Firearm Causing Murder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(j)</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in</p>	15-17

	violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2	
Anthony Lek	<p>Conspiracy to Commit Robbery Affecting Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a)</p> <p>Robbery and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery of Banks and Credit Unions, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2113(a) and (d), and 371</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p>	5-7, 24, 25
Robert Loera	<p>Conspiracy to Commit Robbery Affecting Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a)</p> <p>Robbery and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery of Banks and Credit Unions, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2113(a) and (d), and 371</p> <p>Use of Firearm in Furtherance of Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and 2</p> <p>Accessory After the Fact to Attempted Murder and Assault with a Dangerous Weapon in Aid of Racketeering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1959(a)(5) and 3</p>	5-7, 45

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The maximum penalty each defendant faces upon conviction is life imprisonment. Chavez, Skates, Golden, Cruz, Torres, and Lebron are charged with death-eligible offenses. The decision whether to seek the death penalty against any or all of these defendants is pending. Additionally, periods of supervised release, fines, forfeitures, and special assessments also could be imposed. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

The defendants are all currently in law enforcement custody in various jurisdictions, including in the custody of the United States Marshals Service. Defendants are scheduled to appear before the Honorable Lucy Koh, United States District Judge, on Wednesday, November 18, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Meyer is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Nina Burney and Susan Kreider. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the Salinas Police Department.

Further Information:

Case #: CR 15-00285 LHK

A copy of this press release will be placed on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Abraham Simmons at (415) 436-7264 or by e-mail at Abraham.Simmons@usdoj.gov.