



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Ten Members of the Aryan Knights Prison Gang Indicted on RICO Charges in Federal Court**

BOISE – A federal grand jury indicted ten members of an Idaho prison gang called the Aryan Knights on RICO (the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization Act) charges, U.S. Attorney Bart M. Davis announced. The indictment results from an FBI investigation of the Aryan Knights at the request of the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC).

As alleged in the indictment, the Aryan Knights, or “AK,” was formed in the mid-1990s in the Idaho prison system. It is a prison gang that operates within IDOC prison facilities and also outside of IDOC facilities. It was founded to organize criminal activity for a select group of white inmates within IDOC custody. The AK has white supremacist and white separatist ideologies. Since its founding, the AK has expanded and is now believed to have over 100 members, both inside and outside of IDOC custody. The AK has used violence and the threat of violence to target non-white inmates and other targeted inmates. The AK also has used drug trafficking, extortion, and gambling to generate revenue, which was shared among members. The AK has a leadership structure and an evolving code of conduct.

As alleged in the indictment, the AK arranged to smuggle large quantities of illicit drugs into prison over the years, generating revenue and laundering the proceeds through an outside business. The AK increased and maintained its reputation for violence within IDOC through repeated acts of violence.

The Indictment has three counts. In Count One, nine of the defendants were charged with conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise. They are:

- James Ramsey, age 38;
- Christopher Foss, age 30;
- Harlan Hale, age 53;
- Steven Bowman, age 36;
- Jeremy Brown, age 40;
- Nicholas Sites, age 34;
- Buck Pickens, age 30;
- Lucas Johnson, age 30; and
- Michael McNabb, age 34.

In Count Two, Ramsey and Hale also were charged with attempted murder and assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering for the June 2016 stabbing of an AK member who had come into conflict with Ramsey, the AK's overall leader at the time.

In Count Three, Bowman and Mark Woodland, age 48, were charged with attempted murder and assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering for the February 2017 beating and stabbing of an inmate associated with a rival prison gang.

All defendants, except for Johnson, are currently in IDOC custody. Johnson, a former IDOC inmate, was arrested yesterday.

As charged in the Indictment for Ramsey, Foss, Hale, Bowman, Sites, Pickens, and Johnson, the charge of conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise is punishable by up to life imprisonment.

As charged in the Indictment for Brown and McNabb, the charge of conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise is punishable by up to twenty years imprisonment.

As charged in the Indictment, the charge of attempted murder in aid of racketeering is punishable by up to ten years imprisonment.

As charged in the Indictment, the charge of assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering is punishable by up to twenty years imprisonment.

“This Indictment is the result of remarkable collaboration between state and federal investigators,” said Davis. “It shows the commitment of law enforcement at all levels in Idaho to root out crime wherever it occurs.”

“The defendants in this case didn't let prison walls deter their acts of brazen violence and crime,” said Special Agent in Charge Paul Haertel of the FBI's Salt Lake City Field Office. “The FBI is committed to fighting organized crime wherever it takes place and will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to make that happen.”

“This Indictment will help make our correctional facilities and communities safer,” said IDOC Director Josh Tewalt. “When people in our custody choose to further their criminal activities while incarcerated, it poses a significant danger to our correctional professionals, the vast majority of people in our custody working hard to turn their lives around, and even reaches into our communities.”

The investigation was prompted by information uncovered by the IDOC’s Special Investigations Unit. Because of the depth and scale of the conspiracy, the department requested the assistance of the U.S. Attorney Office for the District of Idaho and the FBI.

In addition to the FBI, IDOC’s Special Investigations Unit, the Ada County Sheriff’s Office, and the Ada County Prosecutor’s Office participated in the investigation.

An indictment is a means of charging a person with criminal activity. It is not evidence. A person is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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