



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Georgia

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Seven charged in 67-count indictment for animal-fighting operation dismantled in Dodge County

Sixty-three dogs seized, rescued in 2018

DUBLIN, GA: Seven men have now been indicted on federal charges involving a dog-fighting operation broken up in 2018 in Dodge County.

The indictments in the Southern District of Georgia were secured in a federal grand jury session by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica Rock, the district's dedicated animal cruelty prosecutor, said Bobby L. Christine, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia. The 67-count indictment targets the owner of a site used for dog fighting and individuals alleged to have participated in fights at the facility.

"Contests of animal cruelty not only are illegal, but also are cesspools of associated criminal activity including gambling, drug trafficking and illegal firearms possession," said U.S. Attorney Christine. "We won't tolerate it, and with our prosecutors and law enforcement partners, we are determined to eradicate this barbaric practice."

The lead defendant in the case, **James Lampkin**, a/k/a "Pookie," 45, of Eastman, Ga., is charged with Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Welfare Act; and 63 counts of Possessing and Training a Dog for Purposes of an Animal Fighting Venture, related to the 63 dogs seized on his property where the dog fights were alleged to have taken place. The charges all are felonies, each carrying a possible penalty upon conviction of up to five years in prison. Lampkin also is charged with Attending an Animal Fighting Venture, a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in prison. Also charged are:

- **Benjamin Shinhoster III**, 40, of Augusta, charged with Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Welfare Act; Transporting and Delivering a Dog for Purposes of an Animal Fighting

Venture; Sponsoring and Exhibiting a Dog in an Animal Fighting Venture; and Attending an Animal Fighting Venture;

- **Deveon Hood**, 33, of Tennille, Ga., charged with Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Welfare Act; and Attending an Animal Fighting Venture;
- **Xavier Simmons**, 34, of Sandersville, Ga., charged with Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Welfare Act; and Attending an Animal Fighting Venture;
- **Andre Archer**, 23, of Sandersville, Ga., charged with Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Welfare Act; and Attending an Animal Fighting Venture;
- **Joe Ford**, 32, of Elgin, S.C., charged with Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Welfare Act, and Attending an Animal Fighting Venture; and,
- **Dwight McDuffie**, 44, of Eastman, Ga., charged with Attending an Animal Fighting Venture.

The animals were seized and the defendants identified on March 17, 2018, when Georgia State Patrol troopers and Georgia Department of Natural Resources game wardens responding to reports of a dog fight being held in the area performed traffic stops in Eastman, discovering a dog in one of the vehicles that appeared to have been injured while fighting. The 63 dogs were later seized at Lampkin's residence after investigators serving a search warrant found the animals chained in the back yard.

While the Asset Forfeiture Unit of the Southern District of Georgia U.S. Attorney's Office initiated a civil forfeiture action, an animal rescue operation took custody of the dogs and evaluated them for adoption. After a favorable ruling in the forfeiture case, with the exception of one animal diagnosed with cancer, all of the dogs were adopted.

"The vicious pastime of pitting animals against each other in a fight to the death has no place in a civilized society," said Special Agent in Charge Jason Williams of USDA-OIG. "The outstanding work of the USDA-OIG agents who investigated this case and the prosecutors of the U.S. Attorney's Office made it possible to bring these operators of a major animal fighting venture to justice."

Criminal indictments contain only charges; defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The case is being investigated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Inspector General, and prosecuted for the United States by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica Rock.

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