



CHESTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

TELEPHONE: 610-344-6801
FAX: 610-344-5905

THOMAS P. HOGAN
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

201 W. MARKET STREET, SUITE 4450
POST OFFICE BOX 2746
WEST CHESTER, PA 19380-0991

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PRESS RELEASE

**Police Find Drugs and
Alligator During Search**

On February 8, 2019, police in Chester County executed a search warrant in South Coatesville, Pennsylvania. Police recovered heroin, crack cocaine, suspected fentanyl, cash, and drug packaging materials. The police also recovered an alligator, which was living in the kitchen of the residence. Irvin "Gotti" Hawkins, Aki Gathright, and Tyrone Jackson have been charged with drug trafficking and related offenses.

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan stated, "Drug dealers will do just about anything to project an image of danger in order to protect their drugs and cash. Some drug dealers use pit bulls or snakes. These drug traffickers kept an alligator in the house. But at the end of the day, the police seized their drugs and money, and the alligator is headed to the zoo."

Three defendants have been charged. They are: Irvin "Gotti" Hawkins, 31 years old, of South Coatesville, Pennsylvania; Aki Gathright, 35 years old, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Tyrone Jackson, 40 years old, of Columbia, Pennsylvania.

The facts alleged in the criminal complaints are as follows:¹

On February 8, 2019, the Chester County Detectives, the South Coatesville Police Department, and the Chester County HIDTA team executed a search warrant at 111 Gibbons Avenue, South Coatesville, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Defendant Hawkins is the renter at that residence.

During the execution of the search warrant, the police found heroin, suspected fentanyl, crack cocaine, and marijuana. Police also found material for packaging and selling drugs, as well as over \$5,000 in cash. Defendants Hawkins, Gathright, and Jackson were all at the residence and all were in actual or constructive possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia.

In the kitchen of the residence, police located an alligator. The defendants claimed that the animal was a caiman, but it has since been identified as an American alligator. The juvenile alligator was approximately three feet long. An adult American alligator grows to approximately 8-10 feet in length.

The alligator has been sent to the Brandywine Zoo. The three defendants were sent to Chester County Prison.

The alligator was placed by Chester County law enforcement in the care of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Brandywine Zoo in Wilmington, Del. The zoo will house the alligator as an educational animal this summer, after which time it will be taken to the St. Augustine Alligator Farm and Zoological Park, an Association of Zoos and Aquariums-approved facility in Florida from which the Brandywine Zoo borrows alligators for summer exhibit.

“We will provide care for the alligator and ensure it is healthy during its stay with the zoo,” said Brint Spencer, the Director of DNREC's Brandywine Zoo, which is managed by DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation. “The Brandywine Zoo is glad we could be of assistance to Chester County law enforcement in placing the alligator in a healthy environment.”

The defendants have been charged with drug trafficking and related offenses. There is no separate charge for possession of an alligator under Pennsylvania criminal law.

¹ A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

District Attorney Hogan added, “When we execute a drug search warrant, we never know what we will find. Sometimes it is an armed drug dealer. Sometimes it is the drug dealer’s terrified family. On this day, it was an alligator. As usual, Chester County law enforcement dealt with the situation professionally, efficiently, and humanely. We are lucky to have such strong law enforcement in Chester County.”

The assigned prosecutor for this case is Assistant District Attorney Michelle Barone. The lead investigator is Chester County Detective Kristin Lund. Anybody with more information can contact Detective Lund at (610) 344-6866.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan