

Vancouver gang leader pleads guilty, U.S. prosecutor to seek 30-year sentence

Last Updated: Wednesday, April 29, 2009 | 7:30 AM PT [Comments 120](#) [Recommend 48](#)
CBC News



Clayton Roueche, seen here at a gathering of the UN gang last year, pleaded guilty in the U.S. on trafficking charges on Tuesday. (CBC)

The alleged leader of the Vancouver area's notoriously violent UN gang is facing up to 30 years in a U.S. prison after pleading guilty to drug-trafficking charges in a Seattle courtroom on Tuesday.

Clayton Roueche, 33, appeared in the U.S. District Court and accepted a plea agreement for conspiring to use small planes and helicopters to import more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana to the U.S. and export cocaine into Canada, and to engage in money laundering.

U.S. attorney Jeff Sullivan indicated that he'll ask for much more than the minimum 10-year sentence at the sentencing hearing on Sept. 18., saying he'll argue that Roueche should serve 30 or more years in a U.S. federal penitentiary with no possibility of transfer to Canada.

Roueche was nabbed by U.S. authorities last year when he tried to attend a wedding in Mexico. Canadian police investigators tipped their Mexican and American counterparts and Roueche was turned away at the Mexican border. His return flight to Canada included a stopover in Texas, where he was arrested.

Lower Mainland police have alleged the UN gang has engaged in a violent struggle with the rival Red Scorpions and other gangs for control of the region's trade in illegal drugs. Police have blamed the gang war for some of the more than 20 fatal shootings across the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley region this year.

With files from The Associated Press and The Canadian Press

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