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Gang Member Sentenced In Racketeering Case

A member of a Dodge City street gang was sentenced Tuesday to prison in a federal racketeering case, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said.

**Anthony Wright,** 27, Dodge City, Kan., was sentenced to nine years in federal prison. Wright pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit racketeering and one count of discharging a firearm in a crime of violence.

In his plea, Wright admitted he was a member of the Norteno street gang when he aided and abetted the murder of Israel Peralta on June 8, 2009, in Dodge City. On the day of the killing, Wright and another conspirator were out driving when they noticed a group of Hispanic males in a trailer park at 201 E. McArtor in south Dodge City who they believed were members of the rival Sureno gang. Later that day, Wright and three other Nortenos met together and decided to get in the car and go looking for Sureno gang members.

Wright drove the Nortenos to the trailer park and parked the car. Two of the Nortenos in the car with Wright were armed. One had a handgun that looked like a machine gun and the other had a revolver. They got out of the car with guns drawn, ran toward the group of Hispanic males and began firing. Israel Peralta was shot and killed. After the shooting, Wright and the other Norteno gang members drove away from the scene.

In his plea, Wright admitted that as a member of the Nortenos he was part of an ongoing criminal enterprise. The gang used murder, robbery, assault and the threat of violence to protect and expand its operations. He admitted that while he was a Norteno he participated in the sale of methamphetamine. Several other Nortenos were active in the sale of methamphetamine at the same time.

Wright is one of 22 Norteno gang members who have been convicted on charges contained in a federal indictment filed May 2012. It was only the second time a federal RICO Act indictment (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) has been filed in Kansas. Three defendants are awaiting sentencing: **Juan Torres**, **Jayson Vargas** and **Alfredo Beltran-Ruiz**.