

# Around the Isles

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## Alleged repeat federal cocaine offender appears on new indictment

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Rafeal Lateef Baker Sr. appeared Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Brunswick for an arraignment and a hearing on a supervised release revocation related to an arrest and indictment on conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine.

Baker — also known as Channel 4 — allegedly trafficked in the substance between September 2014 and April 2016 in Glynn County with co-defendants

Takashia Atkinson and Kenneth Anthony Moore, also known as Smooth.

He pleaded guilty June 20, 2008 to distribution of cocaine hydrochloride, a mixture from which it is not difficult to derive crack. For that, Baker received eight years and four months in federal prison, followed by four years of supervised release. The court amended the prison sentence in December 2012 to six years and eight months.

Baker, 42, began his supervised release in November 2013 following release

from federal prison.

Also, following release after a 2002 conviction on a firearm offense, in February 2005 a Glynn-Brunswick Narcotics Enforcement Team confidential informant bought crack from him. Baker also tested positive twice for cocaine during his release period, leading to revocation of that release.

With that history in mind and the amount of cocaine allegedly possessed, Baker faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison on his current charge, along with no fewer than

five years supervised release and the \$100 mandatory special assessment.

There may be sentence enhancements should Baker be found guilty, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Rafferty said the government would, for among other reasons, seek a sentence enhancement because the alleged crimes took place while Baker was on supervised release.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Probation Office is seeking to revoke that release because of the arrest. Defense attorney Amy Lee Copeland said she was only made

aware of the revocation petition an hour before the hearing, so U.S. Magistrate Judge Stan Baker agreed to delay consideration of that matter until Copeland had time to assess the petition.

Rafferty said the evidence in the case was extensive and related to another major drug trafficking investigation — “Operation Bloody Prince,” which led to the arrest and conviction

of 19 of the local Bloods street gang set — so the defense will have roughly two months to prepare motions and the prosecutors about three weeks to reply, with a hearing scheduled for Dec. 5 at 10 a.m.

Meanwhile, Baker will stay at the McIntosh County jail, so as to provide access for his family locally and his attorney, who is based out of Savannah.



## FA class volunteering at House of Hope

By LAUREN MCDONALD  
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Technically, they were in class.

But on Wednesday, about a dozen Frederica Academy middle school students hopped off a school bus at the House of Hope and hurried upstairs, ready to get back to work.

For the first quarter of the school year, the students in Frederica's community service class will be spending every Monday and Wednesday volunteering at the shelter, which will soon serve victims of sex trafficking.

The students will paint rooms and furniture, as well as plant a garden in the backyard of the house.

The goal of the class is to teach the students how to help others in their community, said Alex Mathis, their teacher.

“We’re getting the kids off campus and seeing different pages of life,” Mathis said. “Everyone doesn’t live the way you live. It’s good seeing and helping, and not using money to fix things, but using your heart and effort.”

Darcelle Bourandt, the founder of House of Hope, plans to open the shelter to six female victims of sex trafficking in the next couple of months.

She said the work by the Frederica Academy students, as well as the support she’s received from the community, have been a tremendous blessing.

“We’ve had every single room in this entire house sponsored by the community,” she said. “Everything, the whole house.”

House of Hope will be a state-licensed group home serving sex trafficking victims.



Frederica Academy seventh and eighth grade community service class students paint a bedroom in House of Hope Wednesday.

“There’s only 33 beds in the state of Georgia that are licensed to do this,” she said. “So mine will be the only one on the coast. The other ones are in Atlanta.”

The young women will live in the house and receive homeschooling and therapy there.

“I’m going to do the therapy myself because I’m a licensed professional counselor,” said Bourandt, who is trained to provide trauma therapy.

Sex trafficking is a growing epidemic nationwide, she said.

“It’s the largest industry in the entire world right now,” she said. “It passed drug addiction.”

Through House of Hope, Bourandt also plans to help raise awareness about the issue, she said, especially among middle school stu-

dents, including the Frederica class volunteering at the house for the next couple months.

“Frederica has been a great help in so many ways,” she said.

Mathis said the students have been passionate about the work so far.

“When we leave on that bus every day, when we finish, they’re excited about what they’ve done and they don’t want to leave,” he said.

Later in the school year, the class will volunteer at Morningstar, Manna House and local nursing homes.

“We have a lot of people in need in this area, and it doesn’t take money always to fix things,” Mathis said.

“It takes a little time and effort, and it makes you feel better about yourself, too.”

## Crime SCENE

Among reports recently filed with police:

### Animal Cruelty

#### Golden Isles Plaza:

Glynn County Animal Control reported someone abandoned a litter of puppies in a shopping mall parking lot. A concerned resident found the animals in a sealed box and called authorities. They will be available for adoption at Glynn County Animal Control on Sept. 18.

### Arrests

#### 515 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.:

FBI agents requested city police assistance in catching two men who were wanted for armed robbery in California and believed to be holed up in Brunswick. Police and agents went to the address and caught them. The two men, both 21, were taken to jail by FBI agents, both booked as fugitives from justice.

#### 2300 block of Woodland Way:

A man lost his temper during an argument with his wife and started breaking things inside the house. Police arrived and took the man to jail.



Provided photo

stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation and the officer found drugs inside. Police arrested the driver and contacted the county’s narcotics squad to investigate.

**200 Mall Blvd.:** A security guard at the Belk store caught a man trying to steal \$168 worth of clothing. Police arrived and took the 36-year-old man to jail, charged with shoplifting.

**2800 block of Stonewall Street:** An “ongoing problem” between a man and a woman got out of hand. Police took both the man and the woman to jail.

### Theft

**2400 block of Bartow Street:** Thieves jacked up a car parked outside of a home and stole two tires with fancy rims. The woman who owned the car noticed the theft when she stepped outside of her house. “After (the) tires were removed, the vehicle was left on (the) jack,” the report said.

**1500 block of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard:** A thief kicked in the door to a business, went inside and swiped a generator.

**900 block of Glynn Isles Parkway:** Two men were sitting in a parked car outside of a hamburger place, smoking dope in a large bong pipe. A concerned citizen called police. The two were still smoking dope when the officer arrived. The officer took both men to jail.

**Q and Albany streets:** Police stopped a vehicle for a traffic violation and found the two people inside possessed drugs. Both people were arrested.

**Nottingham Drive and U.S. Highway 17:** Police

—Larry Hobbs

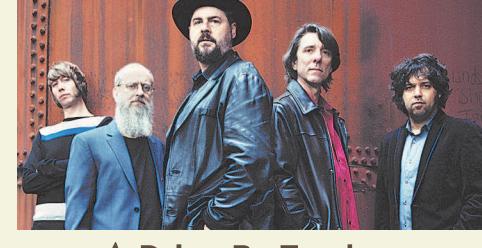


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★ Drive-By Truckers

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