U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Eastern District of Arkansas

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MULTI-STATE METH DEALERS SENTENCED TODAY

Little Rock, AR -- Bud Cummins, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced that four members of a multi-state methamphetamine and money laundering operation were sentenced today before U.S. District Judge James M. Moody in Little Rock.

Byron Jay Ponder, age 43 of Little Rock, Arkansas; Cindy Lou Ponder, age 41 of Little Rock, Arkansas, Kevin Patrick McDermott, age 24 of Burbank, California and William Christopher Clark, age 23 of Warren, Arkansas, were each sentenced after their convictions for Conspiracy to Distribute more than 500 grams of Methamphetamine in the Eastern District of Arkansas and elsewhere and Conspiracy to Launder Drug Proceeds. Drug-related Criminal Forfeitures from each of the named defendants were ordered as well.

According to the Indictment, from 1994 through March, 2004, J.C. Collins supplied methamphetamine from California to various distributors in the Eastern District of Arkansas. Up to two pounds of methamphetamine per month was supplied by Collins to the co-conspirators and his distributors in the Eastern District of Arkansas. On October 14, 2003, $ 11,019 in U.S.

currency was seized from Collins by investigators at the Little Rock National Airport as he prepared to board a flight. Collins is listed as the recipient of several money transfers and a parcel containing currency sent to him by co-conspirators in the case. The Ponders, McDermott and Clark were all involved in the distribution of the organization's methamphetamine and the collection of money from the sales of methamphetamine then conducting financial transactions with the drug money in order to facilitate the drug trafficking.

Byron and Cindy Lou Ponder accepted responsibility for laundering $800,000 in drug related proceeds in this conspiracy. Byron Ponder was assessed responsibility for trafficking between 5 kilograms and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine.

District Judge Moody sentenced Byron Ponder to concurrent terms of 235 months imprisonment for both the Money Laundering and the Methamphetamine Trafficking Conspiracy activities, 5 years of supervised release and a $ 200 special penalty assessment.

Kevin Patrick McDermott was sentenced to concurrent terms of 168 months imprisonment for both the Money Laundering and the Methamphetamine Trafficking Conspiracy activities, 5 years of supervised release and a $ 200 special penalty assessment.

Cindy Lou Ponder and William Christopher Clark were each sentenced to concurrent terms of 87 months imprisonment for both the Money Laundering and the Methamphetamine trafficking Conspiracy charges, 5 years of supervised release and a $ 200 special penalty assessment.

To date, a total of twenty-one members of this organization have been convicted in Federal District Court in the Eastern District of Arkansas for their roles in this criminal activity in this investigation.

"The meth problem is shifting from meth made in small local labs to meth brought in bulk from places like California. These prosecutions demonstrate that law enforcement is a adjusting right along with the drug traffickers," Cummins stated. "Meth continues to plague every community in our state. It is ruining lives and endangering our children. It is a wicked drug and we can't tolerate people bringing it into our neighborhoods."

This investigation is designated as an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case. The indictment is the result of an investigation conducted jointly by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division, the Faulkner County, Arkansas Sheriff's Office, the Conway, Arkansas Police Department, the Conway Regional Drug Task Force, Johnson County, Arkansas Sheriff's Office, Warren, Arkansas Police Department, Russellville, Arkansas Police Department, Arkansas Department of Probation and Parole, Conway, Arkansas.

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