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ORLANDO MAN SENTENCED TO TWENTY YEARS IN COCAINE CASE

Orlando, Florida - On Monday, U.S. District Judge Anne C. Conway sentenced Jonathan Bernard (age 36, of Orlando) to 20 years in federal prison for possessing eight kilograms of cocaine with the intent to distribute it. Bernard had been found guilty on December 16, 2008, following a jury trial.

According to court documents and evidence introduced at trial, on July 1, 2008, a U.S. Postal Inspector conducted a routine inspection of two parcels mailed from Puerto Rico to Orlando that the Inspector believed contained a controlled substance. A drug detection dog alerted to both parcels, which were wrapped identically but addressed to two different men: Luis M. Diaz at 7913 Elmstone Circle, Orlando, and Juan Gracia at 1236 Shoshana Drive, Orlando.

Law enforcement agents directed the delivery of the parcels under surveillance and watched as Diaz signed for the Elmstone Circle parcel and Juan Velez-Gracia signed for the Shoshana Drive parcel. Agents then observed Velez-Gracia drive to Elmstone Circle and contact Diaz. They also observed Bernard arrive at Shoshana Drive, enter the residence, and leave carrying a black shoulder bag.

Agents stopped Bernard's car, and a drug detection dog alerted to the presence of drugs. In Bernard's black bag, agents found eight individually wrapped kilogram-size bricks

of cocaine.

Diaz and Velez-Gracia both pleaded guilty and have been sentenced.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Bruce S. Ambrose.