



Department of Justice

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ELEVEN MEMBERS OF INTERNET DRUG ORGANIZATION SENTENCED

Orlando, Florida - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge David D. Dowd today sentenced Jude LaCour to 97 months in federal prison for drug trafficking and money laundering. The court also ordered Jude LaCour to forfeit over \$9,888,288.00 in assets, which are traceable to proceeds of the offense. As part of his sentence, the court also entered a money judgment in the amount of \$9,888,288.00.

Also sentenced were the following co-defendants:

	Age	Residence	Sentence
Christopher Tobin, M.D.	42	Wilmington, North Carolina	36 months in federal prison, money judgment in the amount of \$315,563
Akhil Baranwal, M.D.	35	Pennsylvania	27 months in federal prison, \$25,000 fine
James Pickens, M.D.	73	Midvale, Utah	21 months in federal prison
Geunnet Chebssi	57	Spencerville, Maryland	15 months in federal prison
Jeffery LaCour (father of Jude LaCour)	61	South Daytona, Florida	3 years probation, 12 months home detention, forfeiture in excess of \$2.1 million in assets traceable to proceeds of the offense
Hudsen Smith	37	Deland, Florida	3 years probation, 12 months home detention, money judgment in the amount of \$40,000

Alexis Roman Torres, M.D.	55	Puerto Rico	18 months in federal prison, money judgment in the amount of \$269,450
Andrew DeSonia, D.O.	48	Indiana	15 months in federal prison, money judgment in the amount of \$109,494
Margaret Fulmore a/k/a McIntosh, M.D.	53	Charlotte, North Carolina	3 years probation, 12 months home detention, money judgment in the amount of \$98,788
Abel Lau, M.D.	37	Tulsa, Oklahoma	3 years probation, 6 months home detention

U.S. Attorney Albritton stated, “The successful prosecution of the owner, operators, doctors, and pharmacists involved in this scheme sends a clear message that unlawful internet drug stores will not be tolerated. Drug dealers cannot successfully hide behind a computer because law enforcement has the technology and skill to find, investigate, and prosecute those involved.”

According to court documents and evidence at trial, the defendants were members of an internet drug organization that distributed controlled substances and other prescription drugs to customers located across the United States who did not have prescriptions. Jude LaCour owned and operated Jive Network, Inc., an organization that used the Internet to distribute and dispense prescription drugs to customers unlawfully. Jeffrey LaCour served as the Director of Operations at Jive Network and Hudson Smith was the Director of Pharmacy/Physician operations.

Jive Network sold controlled substances, mostly stimulants (phentermine, Adipex-P, Ionamin, Meridia, Tehuate) and depressants (Valium, Xanax, Diazepam, and Alprazolam), using internet websites and customer service representatives who were located at its office in Daytona Beach, Florida. Customers, who had no prescriptions, accessed the websites

and purchased the controlled substances, including the cost of shipping, with a credit card or by money order. The customers also completed a short health history questionnaire. Jive Network did not verify the customers' identities or the information on the questionnaire and did not require the customers to submit any medical records during the ordering process.

The LaCours and Smith recruited doctors located across the United States, including Tobin, Baranwal, Roman Torres, DeSonia, Fulmore, Lau, and Pickens, to review health questionnaire answers and approve customer orders for the controlled substances solely on the basis of the answers. The doctors had no face-to-face contact with the customers, did not verify their identities, age or any of the information on the questionnaires, did not conduct any physical examinations or testing, did not review any medical records before approving prescription drug orders for the customers, did not provide any follow-up supervision and often were not licensed in the states in which the customers resided. As proved at trial, Jive Network doctors approved and issued drug orders, not in the course of diagnosing and treating medical conditions, but to facilitate the distribution of drugs pre-selected by customers and for the doctor's own personal profit. Jive Network paid the doctors a fee for each questionnaire they reviewed. Jive Network doctors unlawfully approved and issued "prescription" drug orders outside the usual course of their professional practice and for no legitimate medical purpose. The "prescriptions" they issued for Jive Network customers were invalid.

The LaCours and Smith also recruited pharmacists, including Chebssi, to dispense and ship the drugs to the Internet customers. Jive Network pharmacists filled the orders and shipped the drugs to the customers throughout the United States via Federal Express. Jive Network pharmacists and their pharmacies often were not licensed in the states to

which they shipped drugs. Jive Network pharmacists did not contact the customers and rarely contacted the Jive Network doctors who approved or purportedly approved the “prescription” drug orders. The organization distributed approximately 4.8 million dosage units of Schedule III controlled substances and approximately 39.2 million dosage units of Schedule IV controlled substances to Internet customers who had no valid prescriptions. During the three-year conspiracy, Jive Network received well over 500,000 customer orders for controlled substances and illegally generated revenue in excess of \$85 million.

In addition, the United States proved at trial that Jude LaCour and Jeffrey LaCour agreed to launder the proceeds of the illegal drug conspiracy, and that they transferred millions of dollars via wire transfer and check to their personal brokerage or bank accounts.

The case was investigated jointly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Food and Drug Administration and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Karen L. Gable and Assistant United States Attorney Daniel C. Irick.