



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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THREE CHARGED IN MARIJUANA GROW OPERATIONS IN PINELLAS AND PASCO COUNTY

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces the return by a grand jury of two indictments charging Michael Brown (age 40, of Palm Harbor) of Matthew James (age 31, of Palm Harbor) and Peter James (age 32, of Holiday) with conspiring to possess with intent to distribute one hundred or more marijuana plants. If convicted on all counts, each defendant faces a minimum mandatory sentence of five years and a maximum sentence of 40 years in federal prison.

According to the indictment, starting in 2007 and continuing through January 9, 2009, the defendants conducted marijuana grow operations in six residences in Pinellas and Pasco Counties.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by Drug Enforcement Administration, Pasco County Sheriff's Office and Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kelley C. Howard-Allen.