



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600**

**FIVE MEMBERS OF MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR MARIJUANA RING
CONVICTED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ANTHONY PATTERSON, a/k/a "Rooster," LARRY BARRIS, a/k/a "Tony Panic," PIERRE RILEY, a/k/a "Adrean Francis," a/k/a "Patee," MATTHEW CASAZZA, a/k/a "Estrada," and RONNIE MAZIER, a/k/a "Bruckey," a/k/a "Robert Anthony Barnes," were convicted yesterday afternoon by a jury in Manhattan federal court on charges of conspiring to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 1,000 kilograms and more of marijuana. PATTERSON, BARRIS, RILEY, and CASAZZA were also convicted of possessing firearms in furtherance of the conspiracy. According to documents filed in this case and the evidence presented at trial before United States District Judge NAOMI REICE BUCHWALD:

From 1997 through 2004, a gang known as the "John Shop Crew," which operated out of a Bronx recording studio called John Shop Studio, distributed tens of thousands of pounds of marijuana in the Bronx and elsewhere. PATTERSON, BARRIS, RILEY, CASAZZA and MAZIER were members of the John Shop Crew and participated in the marijuana distribution conspiracy. Using the John Shop Studio and numerous other stash houses in the Bronx, PATTERSON, BARRIS, RILEY, CASAZZA, MAZIER and others sold approximately 2,000 pounds and more of marijuana per week to other, lower level drug dealers in New York City and elsewhere. The marijuana was purchased in, and shipped from, California via air cargo and delivered to the Bronx for sale. The retail value of each weekly shipment of marijuana was approximately \$1,000,000.

A portion of the profits from the sale of the marijuana was used to construct a reggae recording studio in the Bronx. That studio was then used to launch an independent music label called John Shop Records. Additional proceeds from the sale of marijuana were used to record and distribute a number of albums

that featured internationally known reggae and hip-hop artists. Other profits from the marijuana sales were used by members of the John Shop Crew to support their lavish lifestyle including the purchase of homes, luxury vehicles, expensive jewelry and designer clothing.

Starting in 2000, PATTERSON took on a leadership position in the John Shop Crew and began managing the John Shop marijuana business. PATTERSON orchestrated the weekly deliveries of 2,000 pounds and more of marijuana to the Bronx. He also oversaw the covert transportation of hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash proceeds from the sale of the marijuana back to California, where additional marijuana was purchased. BARRIS, RILEY, CASAZZA and MAZIER assisted PATTERSON and others with the marijuana operations; their duties included supervising the delivery of the marijuana to various stash houses in the Bronx and facilitating the bulk sale of that marijuana to other drug dealers for distribution in the New York City area and elsewhere.

According to the evidence presented at trial, PATTERSON, BARRIS, RILEY, and CASAZZA possessed firearms during the conspiracy and used those firearms in furtherance of the marijuana business. Specifically, the John Shop Crew, including these four defendants, were well-armed drug dealers who used numerous firearms to protect the thousands of pounds of marijuana that they were purchasing, storing and selling, as well as the hundreds of thousands of dollars that they were receiving from the sale of marijuana on a weekly basis.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the New York City Police Department in this case.

PATTERSON, BARRIS, RILEY, CASAZZA and MAZIER were tried along with GARFIELD THOMAS, a/k/a "Milo Man," as to whom the jury could not reach a verdict and a mistrial was declared. Three co-defendants, ISHWAN MASON, a/k/a "Trooper," DAMION ELLIOT, and BRIDGETT NEWLAND, a/k/a "Mummi," earlier pleaded guilty and await sentencing. Co-defendant REGGIE CHIN, a/k/a "Irky," is a fugitive.

PATTERSON, BARRIS, RILEY, CASAZZA and MAZIER face a maximum term of life in prison on the counts for which they were convicted. PATTERSON and RILEY each face a mandatory minimum sentence of twenty-five years in prison. BARRIS and CASAZZA face a mandatory minimum sentence of fifteen years in prison. MAZIER faces a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years in prison.

Sentencing is scheduled for June 24, 2008, at 3:00 p.m.
before Judge BUCHWALD.

Assistant United States Attorneys JULIAN J. MOORE and
JOHN T. ZACH are in charge of the prosecution.

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