

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 19, 2012
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ARIZONA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING

BUFFALO, N.Y.---U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Elijah Chaffino, of Tempe Arizona, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and to distribute, 50 kilograms or more of marijuana before Chief U.S. District Judge William Skretny. The charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$1,000,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy C. Lynch, who is handling the case, stated between 2009 and January 2012, the defendant and others conspired to traffic in narcotics between Arizona and the Buffalo area. Chaffino mailed packages containing marijuana from Arizona to several locations in Buffalo. The packages contained at least 80 kilograms of marijuana (the equivalent of more than 160 pounds).

The defendant was arrested along with four others in February 2012. Chaffino is the first defendant to be convicted.

The Indictment is culmination of investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division; Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero; Internal Revenue Service, under the direction of Special Agent-in-Charge Charles R. Pine; United States Postal Service Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector-in-Charge Robert Bethel; Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota; Buffalo Police Department, under the direction of Commissioner Daniel Derenda; Erie County Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Sheriff Tim Howard; Niagara Frontier Transit Authority, under the direction of Chief George Gast; Tempe, Arizona Police Department; Apache County, Arizona Sheriff's Department; and Oklahoma State Police.

Sentencing is scheduled for September 28, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Skretny.

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