

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **TEXAS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG AND MONEY LAUNDERING CONSPIRACY CHARGES**

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Will Johnson, 31, of League City, Texas, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny, to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and to distribute, kilograms of cocaine, and money laundering conspiracy. Johnson was arrested along with 17 others in August of 2010 for narcotics trafficking. The drug conspiracy charge against Johnson carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison, up to life, a \$5,000,000 fine, or both, and the money laundering conspiracy carries a penalty of up to 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Catherine Baumgarten, who is handling the case, stated that Johnson, originally from the City of Buffalo, obtained kilograms of cocaine in Houston and then utilized others to distribute that cocaine in the Buffalo and elsewhere in the Western New York. In July 2010, law enforcement officers executed search warrants at locations including an apartment leased by Johnson in Missouri City, Texas, and his residence located in League City, Texas. Agents seized cocaine and plastic wrappers consistent with the packaging of kilograms of cocaine, \$55,000, one .44 caliber loaded handgun, and boxes of assorted rounds of ammunition.

The investigation further revealed that Johnson deposited and transferred funds generated as a result of his drug trafficking through and to financial institutions, such as when he paid approximately \$13,000, to a used car lot in Buffalo to purchase a 2004 Escalade motor vehicle. Johnson also arranged to have cash deposits of \$20,000 into bank accounts, which thereafter were used as a down payment for his residence in League City, Texas.

As part of the plea, Johnson agreed to forfeit \$203,000 in drug proceeds, including \$57,000 seized by law enforcement officers in the State of Texas in July, 2010, along with a firearm and various ammunition.

The plea is the result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Brian R. Crowell, New York Field Division, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero, the Niagara County Drug Task Force, under the direction of Sheriff James Votour, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent In Charge Toni Weirauch, and the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Transit Police, under the direction of Chief George Gast.

Sentencing is scheduled for April 10, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Skretny.

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