

# Department of Justice

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

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## **NIAGARA COUNTY HUSBAND AND WIFE** **PLEAD GUILTY TO DRUG CHARGES**

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Duane Kneepel, 61, of Lockport, N.Y., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara to conspiracy to manufacture marijuana plants. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both. In addition, Kneepel's wife Pamela, 53, pleaded guilty to maintaining a drug-involved premises. That charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$500,000 fine, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Catherine Baumgarten, who is handling the case, stated that between March and April 2011, the defendants knowingly manufactured marijuana in their residence in Cambria, NY. During the execution of a search warrant, law enforcement officials seized 70 live marijuana plants, along with 19 firearms and 4,100 rounds of ammunition.

The pleas are the result of an investigation by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of under the direction of John P. Gilbride, Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division and the Niagara County Drug Task Force, under the direction of Sheriff James Votour.

Both defendants will be sentenced on January 11, 2012, before Judge Arcara.