

# Department of Justice

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

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## **ROCHESTER MAN AND WOMAN SENTENCED** **ON DRUG CHARGES**

ROCHESTER, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Peter S. Forella, 59, of Rochester, N.Y., and Keia M. Burkey, 41, of Rochester, N.Y., were sentenced for their roles in a cocaine and marijuana conspiracy. Forella, who was convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and to distribute, five kilograms or more of cocaine and 100 or more kilograms of marijuana, and money laundering, was sentenced to 46 months in prison by U.S. District Judge Charles J. Siragusa. Burkey, who was convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and to distribute, cocaine, and money laundering, was sentenced to 24 months in prison by Judge Siragusa.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brett A. Harvey, who handled the case, stated that between 2002 and October 2008, Forella was involved in obtaining kilogram and multiple-kilogram quantities of cocaine, as well as large quantities of marijuana, from suppliers in California. The defendant would then have the cocaine and marijuana shipped or transported to the Western District of New York where he would distribute the drugs to various customers. The conspiracy involved between 15 and 50 kilograms of cocaine, and between 700 and 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. During the conspiracy, both Forella and Burkey possessed firearms at their residence in Macedon, N.Y.

In September 2008, Burkey, acting at the direction of Forella, exchanged small denominations of cash, totaling \$72,000, which constituted drug proceeds, for larger denominations at various commercial locations in the Monroe County area. The defendants did so in an effort to reduce the physical size of the cash and, therefore, make it easier to conceal and transport. On Sept. 27, 2008, Forella and Burkey flew to California and on September 29, 2008, Forella purchased three kilograms of cocaine from a California-based supplier in exchange for the \$72,000 in cash. The defendants concealed the cocaine inside a rental vehicle and began to drive back to the Western District of New York. They were stopped by the Nebraska State Police in the vicinity of Seward, Nebraska, where the cocaine was seized.

To date, 12 other defendants have been convicted of federal drug offenses as a result of this investigation.

The sentencings are the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota, the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Frank Christiano, and the New York State Police, under the direction of Superintendent Joseph D'Amico.

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