

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MAY 17, 2012
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THREE MEN ARRESTED, CHARGED WITH SELLING SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Adel Abdullah, 28, of Lackawanna, N.Y., Mohammed Albanaa, 34, of Buffalo N.Y., and Mohammed Alawi, 45, of Lackawanna, N.Y., were arrested and charged by Criminal Complaint with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and distribution of controlled substance analogues. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas S. Duszkievicz, who is handling the case, stated that on March 9, 2012, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Police notified the Drug Enforcement Administration about a suspicious package at the Federal Express in Cheektowaga. According to the Criminal Complaint, the package was damaged during handling and during a check by FedEx employees, it was discovered that the box contained clear plastic vials of a substance labeled "Cush." Testing of the substance determined that it was synthetic marijuana.

The Complaint further alleges that the package was addressed to Speedy Distribution at 1799 Genesee St. in Buffalo, also the address of Speedy Market. An undercover law enforcement official thereafter went to the address and made multiple purchases of "Cush" and "Mr. Happy," another name by which synthetic marijuana is marketed, from the defendants.

Subsequent searches of the Lackawanna home where defendants Abdullah and Alawi reside and of the Speedy Market uncovered multiple packages of suspected synthetic marijuana. The packages contained such names as "Sunshine," "Route 69," "G-20," "G-13," "Wicked," "Scooby Snax," "Atomic," "White Widow," "Da Blubonic Chronic," and "Black

Yum Yum." A bulk spice product and materials to package the suspected synthetic marijuana were also found.

"The public needs to know that synthetic drugs pose several dangers, besides being illegal when intended for human consumption. Scientists and doctors do not fully know the long term effects of these drugs. What we do know, is that in the short run, those ingesting synthetic marijuana have suffered any number of dangerous reactions which have landed them in emergency rooms. These reactions have included vomiting, extreme agitation, heart attacks and psychosis," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "While our Office will continue to work aggressively with our law enforcement partners to keep these dangerous drugs off the streets of our communities, the best defense for the health of our citizens public is to not let them get into the hands of our young people in the first place. For these reasons, we are also asking the public that if they see something as is described here, say something to a nearby law enforcement officer or this Office."

The prosecution is the culmination of an investigation on the part of the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division; the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Police, under the direction of Chief George Gast, and the Lackawanna Police Department, under the direction of Chief James Michel.

The defendants appeared before U.S. Magistrate Judge Hugh B. Scott for a detention hearing on May 16, 2012. Defendant Albanna was remanded, while defendants Abdullah and Alawi were released.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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