



U.S. Department of Justice

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LEADER OF METHAMPHETAMINE ORGANIZATION **GUILTY ON FEDERAL CHARGES**

Little Rock - Bud Cummins, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced that verdicts of guilty were returned after 8 days of trial against J.C. Collins, a/k/a Jason Collins, of Chatsworth, California, in a trial before U.S. District Judge James M. Moody in Little Rock.

Collins, age 36, was found guilty of Conspiracy to Distribute more than 500 grams of Methamphetamine in the Eastern District of Arkansas and elsewhere, Conspiracy to Launder Drug Proceeds, and four counts of Money Laundering. Drug-related forfeiture of assets alleged to have been derived from methamphetamine trafficking from Collins are being sought in related criminal proceedings as well.

According to the Indictment and the evidence presented at trial, from 1994 through March, 2004, J.C. Collins supplied methamphetamine from California to various distributors in the Eastern District of Arkansas. Up to two pounds of methamphetamine per month was supplied by Collins to the co-conspirators and his distributors in the Eastern District of Arkansas. On October 14, 2003, \$11,019 in U.S. currency was seized from Collins by investigators at the Little Rock National Airport as he prepared to board a flight. Collins is listed as the recipient of several money transfers and a parcel containing currency sent to him by co-conspirators indicted in this case. Collins was identified as the organizer and leader of this drug trafficking and money laundering organization. Sixteen witnesses testified concerning Collins' role in the distribution of the organization's methamphetamine and the collection of money from the sales of methamphetamine then conducting financial transactions with the drug money in order to facilitate the drug trafficking.

To date, a total of twenty-two members of this organization have been convicted in Federal District Court in the Eastern District of Arkansas for their roles in the criminal activity in this investigation.

"Recent efforts by law enforcement and new laws passed by the Arkansas legislature are making it more difficult to operate local meth labs," Cummins stated. "That's the good news, but it means we are seeing an increase in importation of methamphetamine manufactured outside of the state. Today's conviction demonstrates our commitment to make life miserable not just for the local meth lab operator, but also for those who think they want to bring meth here from other places. No matter where the drug comes from, we are going to prosecute and convict meth dealers."

Conspiracy to Distribute more than 500 grams of methamphetamine carries a minimum mandatory term of 20 years imprisonment in this case. Conspiracy to Launder Drug Proceeds and Money Laundering is punishable by a term of up to 20 years imprisonment. Collins has been previously convicted of Possession of Marihuana with the Intent to Distribute and Battery with Serious Physical Injury in separate incidents in California state proceedings.

Collins was taken into custody after the jury's verdict in light of trial testimony of his intimidation of witnesses during the trial last week.

Sentencing in this matter will be scheduled by District Judge Moody.

This investigation is designated as an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case. The indictment is the result of an investigation conducted jointly by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division, the Faulkner County, Arkansas Sheriff's Office, the Conway, Arkansas Police Department, the Conway Regional Drug Task Force, Johnson County, Arkansas Sheriff's Office, Warren, Arkansas Police Department, Russellville, Arkansas Police Department, Arkansas Department of Probation and Parole, Conway, Arkansas.

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