



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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**CONTACT: Bud Cummins
United States Attorney
501-340-2650**

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE RESULTS IN OVER 30-YEAR SENTENCE FOR CALIFORNIA MAN

Little Rock – Bud Cummins, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced that Eric Wayne Tyler, age 36, of Los Angeles, California, was sentenced earlier today by U.S. District Judge George Howard, Jr.

Tyler pled guilty on June 26, 2006, for his role as a member of a conspiracy responsible for the distribution of more than 100 kilograms of marihuana in the Eastern District of Arkansas and elsewhere. Tyler also pled guilty to possessing a .45 caliber handgun during his marihuana trafficking activities.

Today, District Judge Howard sentenced Tyler to a total term of 352 months in prison without parole for conspiracy to distribute between 100 kilograms and 400 kilograms of marihuana. Additionally, he was ordered to serve a 60-month term of imprisonment consecutive to the drug sentence for use of firearms during the drug trafficking crime. Forfeiture of the seized U.S. Currency was ordered, as well.

“One wonders if people actually notice these huge sentences we are obtaining for crimes involving guns,” stated Cummins. “This 36 year old man will be about 65 when he next sees freedom. You would think that other criminals who read or hear about this would think about cleaning up their own acts. If not, Project Safe Neighborhoods has a solution waiting for them, too.”

According to the Indictment and the proceedings in this case, Tyler, along with his codefendants, Changus Leon Bell and Ruthie Mae Littles, were obtaining parcels containing marihuana that were shipped to Little Rock sometimes several times a week. Tyler and Bell employed Littles to sign as the recipient for the parcels containing the marihuana, which was in turn distributed to others. On December 10, 2004, investigators in the case executed a search

and seizure warrant on a Little Rock residence and arrested Tyler and Bell in possession of more than 75 pounds of marihuana, a firearm and more than \$20,000 in drug-related cash.

At the time of his arrest in this case, Tyler had been convicted of Possession of Cocaine Base for Sale in a 1992 California State Court proceeding, as well as Possession/Purchase of cocaine base in a separate case that same year. In 1995, Tyler was convicted of Sale of a Controlled Substance. Tyler was convicted in 2003 of being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm. All of these previous convictions were adjudicated in the state of California.

Co-defendant Bell is scheduled for sentencing before District Judge Howard on November 21, 2006. Co-defendant Littles was sentenced to a term of 60 months probation for her role in this case.

This case is designated as a Project Safe Neighborhoods case. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federal initiative aimed at reducing gun crime by networking local prosecutors and law enforcement with federal counterparts. Those prosecuted under federal statutes typically serve longer sentences partly due to the fact that there is no parole in the federal system.

Tyler's prosecution and conviction is the result of the combined efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Little Rock Police Department, and the Arkansas Highway Police who all contributed to this successful prosecution effort.

Senior Litigation Counsel Kevin Alexander presented the case for the United States.

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For more information on Project Safe Neighborhoods visit www.psn.gov.