



U.S. Department of Justice

***United States Attorney
Eastern District of Arkansas***

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**GUNS AND DRUGS NETS LITTLE ROCK MAN
21 YEARS FEDERAL TIME WITH NO PAROLE**

Little Rock— Bud Cummins, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced that Barry Allen Weatherford, age 31, of Little Rock, Arkansas, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge James M. Moody, Jr.

District Judge Moody sentenced Weatherford to a total term of 252 months in prison without parole. Terms of 168 months imprisonment were imposed for conspiracy to distribute more than 1000 kilograms of marihuana, conspiracy to distribute more than 5 kilograms of Cocaine Hydrochloride, and conspiracy to launder drug proceeds. An additional term of 84 months imprisonment to be served consecutively to the other sentences in this case was imposed for Weatherford's use of firearms during these drug trafficking crimes.

"We continue to try to educate the community through prosecutions like this one that the price for dealing in large quantities of drugs is too high to pay," stated Cummins. "This defendant also used extremely poor judgment to mix guns and drugs. That decision alone cost him seven years of freedom."

According to the Indictments in this case, Barry Allen Weatherford and others conspired to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of Marihuana and more than 5 kilograms of Cocaine Hydrochloride between 1996 and October 1, 2004, in this district and elsewhere.

In earlier proceedings, Weatherford pled guilty to Conspiracy to Distribute more than 5 kilograms of Cocaine Hydrochloride, Conspiracy to Launder Drug Proceeds and to Discharging a Firearm during a drug trafficking crime. Weatherford also agreed to forfeit his interest in Pulaski County, Arkansas property used to facilitate the drug trafficking activities in this case.

During today's sentencing proceedings, Weatherford was assessed responsibility as a leader of this extensive criminal enterprise resulting in an enhanced sentence. Weatherford was held accountable for distribution of not less than 1,000 kilograms and not more than 3,000

kilograms of Marihuana, not less than 5 kilograms and not more than 15 kilograms of Cocaine Hydrochloride, and for the laundering of illegal drug proceeds for his role in this operation.

Judge Moody ordered the forfeiture of Weatherford's interest in Art's Liquor, 6909 Arch Street in Little Rock – the site of a drug debt kidnapping involving co-defendants Jose Enrique Mendiola, Chris Alexander, and Marcos Antonio Ponce.

Co-defendants Mendiola, Alexander, Ponce, Daniel Jiminez, and Mark Fouts have already been sentenced for their roles in this case.

Jose Enrique Mendiola was previously sentenced to 330 months imprisonment for his role as a leader in this drug and money laundering operation. Mendiola's sentence included terms of imprisonment for the use of firearms and enhancements as a leader in the criminal activities.

Chris Alexander was previously sentenced to a total term of 150 months imprisonment. 120 months of his sentence was imposed for his use of firearms in this criminal activity.

Marcos Antonio Ponce was previously sentenced to 183 months in the Bureau of Prisons for his conviction for drug and firearms violations in this case.

Daniel Javier Jimenez was previously sentenced to a total term of 70 months imprisonment. Jimenez's sentencing includes enhancements for his possession of firearms as well.

Mark S. Fouts was sentenced to a total term of 87 months imprisonment for his role in this organization.

The remaining six defendants charged in this matter are scheduled for trial before District Judge Moody commencing March 5, 2007.

This prosecution and conviction is the result of the combined efforts of the participants in the District's Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force. The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division, the Little Rock Police Department, the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office, the Arkansas State Police and the Arkansas Highway Police all contributed to this successful prosecution effort. Senior Litigation Counsel Kevin Alexander prosecuted the case for the United States.

This matter is designated 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 serve longer sentences partly due to the fact that there is no parole in the federal system.

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