



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates
Northern District of Georgia

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

CANADIAN NATIONAL ARRESTED WITH SUITCASE FULL OF COCAINE-SOAKED CLOTHES SENTENCED TO OVER 3 YEARS IN PRISON

ATLANTA, GA - ELIZABETH LOUISE WYONCH, 59, of Montreal, Canada, was sentenced to federal prison today by United States District Judge Orinda D. Evans on four counts of drug trafficking, including the intentional importation of cocaine into the United States, and possession of at least 500 grams of cocaine with the intent to distribute.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the case, "Trying to smuggle cocaine or any other dangerous drug is more than a risky proposition. Customs and Border Patrol officers at our airports are waiting for you. And when you are caught, you will go into a federal prison cell."

WYONCH was sentenced to 3 years, 1 month in prison, to be followed by 4 years of supervised release. On December 31, 2009, she pleaded guilty to the charges of conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States from outside the country, importing cocaine into the United States, conspiracy to possess at least 500 grams of cocaine with the intent to distribute and possession of at least 500 grams of cocaine with the intent to distribute.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the following charges and other information presented in court: On July 27, 2009, the Border Intelligence Office in Buffalo, New York, received an anonymous tip that a woman named ELIZABETH WYONCH would be traveling into the United States with an unknown amount of cocaine concealed in a suitcase. Investigators subsequently learned that on July 29, 2009, WYONCH was scheduled to fly into Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport from Lima, Peru, with a final destination of Montreal, Canada. Customs and Border Patrol officers stopped WYONCH going through customs and inspected her luggage. During the secondary inspection, Customs officers noticed that the clothing inside one of the suitcases was unusually stiff to the touch. A field drug test conducted on a section of the clothing gave a positive reading for the presence of cocaine. It was later determined that over three kilograms of cocaine had been soaked into various items of clothing contained in her luggage. She was immediately arrested.

The case was investigated by U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Assistant United States Attorney Rodney Bullard prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.