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REMAINING DEFENDANT IN A MAJOR DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force: “Operation Fowl Play” and “Rio Gallo”

LAKE CHARLES, La. – The remaining defendant of a large scale cocaine trafficking organization was sentenced today to 10 years in federal prison, followed by five years supervised release, United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced. Jessica Washington, 36, of Jeanerette, La., was sentenced by U. S. District Judge Patricia Minaldi, for conspiracy to possess and distribute cocaine and unlawful use of a communication facility.

Washington is the remaining defendant out of 18 defendants indicted, following an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation dubbed “Operation Fowl Play” and “Rio Gallo.” After a nine-day trial on October 1, 2009, Washington was found guilty on one count of conspiracy to possess and distribute cocaine and two counts of unlawful use of a communication facility.

Testimony revealed that Jessica Washington was involved with her husband, Kenneth Washington, in the coordinating of drug trafficking activities. The defendant participated in phone calls made from jail by her husband, during which they discussed the delivery of cocaine and transportation of drug proceeds. Through the coordination of these activities with Kenneth Washington, Jessica Washington was directly responsible for distributing approximately 7 kilograms of cocaine and transporting \$250,000.00 dollars in cocaine trafficking proceeds. The Kenneth Washington cocaine trafficking organization was responsible for distributing over 100 kilograms of cocaine.

OCDETF is a joint multi-agency group consisting of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies with a cooperative approach to combat drug trafficking, and in this case involved Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) - Lafayette, LA and Brownsville, TX offices, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation (Lafayette and Brownsville), Louisiana State Police, and the Cameron County District Attorney’s Office, Brownsville, Texas. The Drug Enforcement Administration,

Lafayette, Louisiana Post of Duty, is a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) initiative comprised of special agents of the DEA, and agents from the Iberia Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office, Lafayette Police Department, Vermilion Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Office, Acadia Parish Sheriff's Office, St. Landry Parish Sheriff's Office, Opelousas Police Department and the Louisiana National Guard.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys J. Collin Sims and John Luke Walker.

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