



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian
Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2011

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CONTACT: John G. Duncan

(315) 448-0672

16 ARRESTED IN MARIJUANA CONSPIRACY

Syracuse, NY—United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian announced the arrest and indictment of sixteen (16) individuals in connection with a large marijuana distribution organization in Central New York. Those indicted in the marijuana distribution conspiracy include the following:

OCTAVIO SANTIAGO, a/k/a Tito, age 41, Deltona, Florida;
MARIO BELL, age 35, Syracuse, New York;
KENNETH TARBELL, age 42, Nedrow, New York;
DALE LANCTO, age 40, Baldwinsville, New York;
HARRY WILBUR, age 29, Syracuse, New York;
JOSE CRUZ, age 32, Syracuse, New York;
DONALD WILBUR, age 34, Constable, New York;
CHRISTOPHER COOKE, age 49, Moira, New York;
PHILLIP IRIZARRY, age 39, Syracuse, New York;
TODD LAUZON, age 23, Mattydale, New York;
JOHN PHILLIPS, a/k/a JP, age 40, Syracuse, New York;
CHARLES TIFT, age 40, Syracuse, New York;
MICHAEL AROCHO, age 37, Syracuse, New York;
JAMES FROIO, age 27, North Syracuse, New York;
CODY STASKO, age 22, Mattydale, New York; and
HUEY TARBELL, age 43, Syracuse, New York.

All of these individuals have been indicted by a federal grand jury with conspiring to possess with the intent to distribute and distributing over 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. If convicted, the defendants face a mandatory ten year minimum term of imprisonment up to a

maximum of life imprisonment, up to a \$4 million fine, and at least five years of supervised release following any period of incarceration.¹

These prosecutions resulted from an investigation undertaken in the Spring of 2009 by the Syracuse Resident Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Central New York HIDTA Strike Force, the Internal Revenue Service, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The HIDTA Strike Force is comprised of agents, detectives, and investigators from the DEA, Onondaga County Sheriff's Office, the Syracuse Police Department, and the Onondaga County District Attorney's Office. The investigation, which included wiretaps on several of the defendants' telephones, revealed that this marijuana trafficking organization was responsible for the distribution of approximately 300 to 500 pounds of marijuana per month in the Central New York area. The marijuana, believed to be grown in Canada, was smuggled across the border and then transported to the Syracuse area where it was distributed to others by members of the conspiracy.

To date, the following items have been recovered during this investigation: approximately 270 pounds of marijuana; 29 guns; \$290,000.00 in U.S. currency; 21 vehicles; and drug paraphernalia.

Further questions or inquiries may be directed to Assistant United States Attorney Carla Freedman, the prosecutor handling the case, at (315) 448-0672.

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¹The charges announced today are mere allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.