



Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE

Richard S. Hartunian, United States Attorney for the Northern District of New York announces today that , **MICHAEL BIALEK**, age 36, of Utica was sentenced yesterday in U.S. District Court in Syracuse to 135 months imprisonment, followed by 5 years of supervised release, in connection with his convictions for Conspiracy to Possess With Intent To Distribute Cocaine and cocaine base (crack) and Money Laundering. As part of his plea of guilty, **MICHAEL BIALEK** agreed to forfeit his interest in a 2003 white Acura MDX Automobile, a 2002 Jaguar, and 2006 gray Maserati Quattroporte automobile, \$7,169.00 in U.S. Currency as well as agreeing to a money judgement of \$27,423.75.

MICHAEL BIALEK was the subject of a multi-agency, federal, state and local Drug Task Force investigation that began during the Spring of 2008 when he was returned to Utica as part of a New York State work release program in connection with a previous New York State felony drug conviction. In May 2008 **BIALEK** began bringing multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine powder from New York City to Utica, where it was stored and later distributed. **MICHAEL BIALEK** utilized local Utica area drug dealers to distribute and transport his cocaine. These included Trewayne Sanders, who was sentenced in federal court on July 8, 2011 to serve an 84 month term of imprisonment in connection with his conviction for possession with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base (crack) and his possession of a firearm as a convicted felon, followed by 8 years of supervised release.

MICHAEL BIALEK laundered the profits from his drug sales through a local car dealer, Salvatore "Torre" Viti, who purchased high end automobiles, such as Maseratis and other vehicles from online auto auctions so that they could be resold, thereby effectively hiding the illegal source of the funds. Salvatore T. Viti pled guilty to six counts of money laundering and was sentenced in federal court on September 8, 2011 to serve 18 months in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release and forfeiture of vehicles and cash seized during the investigation.

This prosecution resulted from a joint investigation undertaken by The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (Syracuse Office), The U.S. Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigations (Syracuse Office), The New York State Police/Community Narcotics Enforcement

Team (CNET-Central region), The U.S. Probation Department (Syracuse Office) and the City of Rome Police Department. Assistance was also provided by the Oneida County District Attorney's Office.

Further inquiries can be directed to AUSA Richard R. Southwick at 315-448-0672.