



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 24, 2009

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
YUSILL SCRIBNER,
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,
JANICE OH
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

LARGE-SCALE NEW YORK CITY MARIJUANA TRAFFICKER
SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that WINSTON CLARKE, a/k/a "Wimpy," was sentenced yesterday to 180 months in prison for his involvement in a marijuana trafficking conspiracy. In October 2008, CLARKE, 48, was found guilty following a jury trial in Manhattan federal court of conspiring to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana.

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial before United States District Judge DEBORAH A. BATTS:

From 1996 through January 2002, CLARKE was the leader of an organization that trafficked large multi-kilogram quantities of marijuana in the New York City area. The evidence showed that in order to continue selling large amounts of marijuana, CLARKE used his connections with various members of a gang known as the "John Shop Crew" to smuggle marijuana from California to the New York City area. The evidence showed that the marijuana was purchased in, and shipped from, California via air cargo to airports in the New York City area. Once the marijuana arrived, CLARKE ordered his workers to go to airports in the New York City area and pick up hundreds of pounds of marijuana at a time.

The evidence further showed that once the marijuana was picked up from the airports, CLARKE's workers brought the marijuana back to various stash houses in the Bronx. The workers then stored and packaged the marijuana for further distribution. The evidence also showed that CLARKE and his workers kept firearms at the stash houses in order to protect the large amounts of marijuana and money that was being stored at these locations. After the marijuana was packaged, large wholesale amounts were sold to other marijuana distributors for hundreds of dollars per pound, and smaller retail amounts of marijuana were

sold to customers for "nickel" and "dime" amounts out of store fronts throughout the Bronx that were owned by CLARKE. The evidence showed that after the marijuana was sold, CLARKE ordered his workers to ship small refrigerators and stereo speakers that contained tens of thousands of dollars of marijuana proceeds to California so that more marijuana could be purchased and sent back to the New York City area.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

Assistant United States Attorneys LOYAAN A. EGAL and CHI T. STEVE KWOK are in charge of the prosecution.

09-378

###