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**EXTRADITED GHANAIAN DRUG KINGPIN AND NEW YORK CITY
DISTRIBUTER PLEAD GUILTY TO SMUGGLING
HEROIN INTO THE UNITED STATES**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ATTAH EVAN KWASI, a large-scale heroin trafficker extradited from Ghana to the United States, and NEWMAN AYIWAH, a New York City heroin distributor, pleaded guilty before United States Magistrate Judge MICHAEL H. DOLINGER in Manhattan federal court late yesterday. KWASI, 48, pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to import kilogram quantities of heroin from Ghana to the United States. AYIWAH, 47, pleaded guilty both to conspiracy to import heroin into the United States, and to conspiracy to distribute the heroin in the New York City area.

According to the Indictment, the Government's recitation of the evidence at the plea proceeding, and the extradition documents filed in this case, KWASI operated an international heroin-trafficking organization based in Accra, Ghana. As part of his heroin-trafficking business, KWASI recruited couriers who swallowed pellets containing heroin and traveled from Ghana to the United States on board commercial airliners. After arriving in the United States, the heroin couriers transported the heroin to the New York City area. In New York City, AYIWAH and other co-conspirators distributed the heroin to the organization's customers. AYIWAH was arrested on January 28, 2005, in the Bronx, New York, in possession of over 500 grams of heroin.

Also charged were three heroin couriers, JULIUS DARKWA, ELIZABETH MANU-OWUSU, and MOUSS TOUH, all of whom worked for the organization, as well as NANA SARPRONG, another New York City distributor, for their participation in the criminal organization. Specifically, the Indictment references a shipment in October 2004, when KWASI sent DARKWA, his courier, from Ghana

to the Bronx, New York, with a quantity of heroin that DARKWA had previously ingested. Similarly, the Indictment alleges that in November 2004, KWASI gave another quantity of heroin to MANU-OWUSU in Ghana, which she also ingested, to be delivered to the Bronx, New York. SARPRONG and TOUH were arrested in New York in November 2004, and DARKWA was arrested at John F. Kennedy Airport in October 2004. MANU-OWUSU was arrested in December 2004 by Ghanaian law enforcement as she attempted to depart the international airport in Accra, Ghana.

KWASI was indicted in October 2004 by a grand jury in the Southern District of New York. In December 2004, KWASI was arrested in Ghana for extradition purposes, pursuant to a request by the United States to the Government of Ghana. After litigation in the Ghanaian courts, a Ghanaian judge granted the United States' request that KWASI be extradited to face the charges in the Indictment. The extradition process was completed Thursday, August 18, 2005, when KWASI was flown from Ghana to the Southern District of New York.

According to the extradition papers, law enforcement authorities in Ghana and the United States seized kilogram quantities of heroin from KWASI and his organization. The Indictment estimates that KWASI and his organization derived approximately one million dollars from their heroin trafficking crimes. As part of his plea agreement with the Government, KWASI agreed to forfeit the one million dollars.

KWASI and AYIWAH will be sentenced by United States District Judge LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN, and each face a mandatory minimum of ten years' imprisonment and a maximum of life imprisonment for the charges to which they pleaded guilty.

SARPRONG is scheduled to go to trial before Judge SWAIN on October 3, 2006. The remaining defendants have all pleaded guilty.

Mr. GARCIA praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the New York Drug Enforcement Task Force, the New York City Police Department, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York State Police, the United States Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the United States Marshal Service.

Assistant United States Attorneys AMY FINZI and GLEN G. McGORTY are in charge of the prosecution.

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