

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **MEMBERS OF ARIZONA TO BUFFALO DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION INDICTED**

BUFFALO, N.Y.---U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that a federal grand jury has returned an Indictment charging members of an alleged drug trafficking conspiracy with supplying large amounts of cocaine and marijuana from Arizona to the Buffalo area. Two of the defendants are also charged with money laundering. The narcotics charge carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison, and a maximum of life, a \$10,000,000 fine or both, while the money laundering offense is punishable up to twenty years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

The charged defendants are identified as Jordan Ali, formerly of Alden, N.Y, but now residing in Tempe, Arizona; Shane Grafman, of Prescott, Arizona; Jason Nati, of Buffalo, N.Y.; Elijah Chaffino, of Tempe Arizona; and Jacquelyn Witman, formerly of Buffalo, N.Y., but now residing in the Atlanta, Georgia area.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Timothy C. Lynch, who is handling the case, the Indictment alleges that between 2004 and February 2011, the defendants conspired to possess with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and 100 kilograms or more of marijuana. The defendants are alleged to have obtained the narcotics in the State of Arizona, and to have thereafter utilized several methods to send the marijuana and cocaine to the Buffalo area, including cars, trucks, shipping crates and United States Postal Service parcels.

During the course of the conspiracy, law enforcement seized approximately one million dollars in United States currency, including \$671,385 from a hidden compartment within a Honda Ridgeline driven by Shane Grafman; \$21,150 seized from Jacquelyn Witman at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport; and \$299,950 from a vehicle located in Apache County, Arizona.

The investigation culminated in Jordan Ali's arrest, on January 31, 2012, in Buffalo, when he arrived to collect money for marijuana the group had recently shipped to Buffalo in United States Postal Service parcels. Law enforcement agents had intercepted and seized these parcels prior to the marijuana being distributed in the Buffalo area. Elijah Chaffino was arrested this week in Arizona. The remaining defendants have not been arrested as of yet and are at large.

Defendants Jordan Ali and Shane Grafman are also charged with money laundering conspiracy.

"This case is yet another example of the exceptional skill and team work of this area's law enforcement community," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "In this case, substantial quantities of narcotics were recovered before they could reach our streets. The fact that authorities also seized almost one million dollars in suspected illicit proceeds means that the possible profit from these crimes has also now been removed from those who engaged in the offenses."

The Indictment is culmination of investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division; Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James C. Spero; Internal Revenue Service, under the direction of under the direction Special Agent-in-Charge Charles R. Pine; United States Postal Service Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector-in-Charge Robert Bethel; Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota; Buffalo Police Department, under the direction of Commissioner Daniel Derenda; Erie County Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Sheriff Tim Howard; Niagara Frontier Transit Authority, under the direction of Chief George Gast; Tempe, Arizona Police Department; Apache County, Arizona Sheriff's Department; and Oklahoma State Police.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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