

Department of Justice

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

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CONTACT: BARBARA BURNS
PHONE: (716) 843-5817
FAX: (716) 551-3051

NIAGARA FALLS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRING TO DISTRIBUTE CRACK

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced that Mark Smith, 47, of Niagara Falls, N.Y., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and distribute, crack cocaine before Chief U.S. District Court Judge William M. Skretny. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of \$1,000,000 or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert C. Moscati, who is handling the case, stated that Smith conspired with other individuals to distribute cocaine in and around the Niagara Falls area beginning in early 2008 through March 2009.

Smith and 23 other individuals were arrested in a large, joint, federal, state and local takedown on March 11, 2009, culminating a long-term investigation of gang, drug-related activity in Niagara Falls, New York.

The plea is the result of an investigation the part of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Frank Christiano; the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Wilbert L. Plummer, Acting Special Agent in Charge, New York Field Division, the New York State Police, under the direction of Major Christopher Cummings; the Niagara Falls Police Department, under the direction of Superintendent John Chella; and the Niagara County District Attorney's Office, under the direction of District Attorney Michael Violante.

Sentencing is scheduled for August 7, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Skretny.

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