



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, DECEMBER 06, 2010
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LUCASVILLE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO GROWING AND DISTRIBUTING MORE THAN 1,000 KILOGRAMS OF POT

Plea also includes obstruction of justice, money laundering charges

COLUMBUS –Kevin L. Burton, 49, of Lucasville pleaded guilty in United States District Court to conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and money laundering charges connected to a marijuana growing operation he oversaw in southern Ohio that reached into central Ohio and South Carolina.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cincinnati (FBI), and Scioto County Sheriff Marty V. Donini announced the pleas entered today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Terence P. Kemp.

Burton pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to manufacture, distribute and possess with intent to distribute 1000 kilograms or more of marijuana, one count of conspiracy to obstruct justice, and one count of money laundering.

Conspiracy to manufacture more than 1000 kilograms of marijuana is punishable by at least ten years and up to life imprisonment. Each of the other crimes is punishable by up to 20 years imprisonment.

According to a statement of facts read during Burton's plea hearing, Burton grew and distributed marijuana for more than 15 years. He and co-conspirators distributed the marijuana in the Newark, Ohio area and also traveled to South Carolina to distribute it there.

At the hearing, an FBI agent testified that during the course of the investigation, the FBI documented substantial cash expenditures by Burton. Burton acquired real estate during the course of this conspiracy, and utilized much of it as places to grow, clean and store the marijuana. In 2005 and 2006, Burton spent more than \$1 million in cash to build two car washes -- one in Lucasville, Ohio and one in Jackson, Ohio.

After Burton learned he was under federal investigation, he stopped his grow operation and advised a number of the people working for him to close down the grow rooms and destroy any marijuana plants. Subsequently, a number of the people who worked for Burton were subpoenaed before the grand jury and some were given immunity. Burton began reaching out to these individuals to warn them to keep his name out of it.

Earlier this year, Burton sold the car wash he had constructed in Jackson, Ohio and laundered the proceeds through several financial transactions in an attempt to conceal the funds from federal investigators.

As part of his plea agreement, Burton will forfeit \$414,109.16 in cash and real estate.

Sheriff's deputies and FBI agents arrested Burton on June 15 based on charges in a federal indictment. Burton has been in custody since his arrest.

A co-defendant, Anna L. Montgomery, 47, of the Newark, Ohio area pleaded guilty on October 13, 2010 to one count of obstruction of justice for helping Burton approach potential witnesses. She is awaiting sentencing.

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation led by Scioto County Sheriff's deputy John Koch and FBI Special Agent Brian Carroll, along with Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kevin Kelley and Robyn Hahnert, who are prosecuting the case.

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