



Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

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STEVE YASSINE ENTERS GUILTY PLEA IN FEDERAL DRUG CASE

In Austin this morning, 39-year-old Steve Austin Yassine, a citizen of the Ivory Coast living in Austin, pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute and distribution of cocaine. As a result, Yassine faces an agreed sentence of one year and a day in federal prison followed by deportation to the Ivory Coast.

Appearing before United States District Judge Sam Sparks, Yassine admitted that on January 11, 2008, he assisted others including 29-year-old Amar Araf, in the sale of approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a kilogram of cocaine at a gas station on Cameron Road in Austin, Texas. Furthermore, Yassine admitted that he participated in the negotiations for the price of the cocaine and counted the money during the transaction. In exchange for his guilty plea, prison term and subsequent deportation, the Government will request dismissal of all remaining charges against Steve Yassine at sentencing.

In a related matter, 29-year old Karim Faiq of Manor, TX, one of Steve's co-defendants in a separate drug case, arrived in Florida today after being arrested and deported by Honduran authorities. Faiq fled the country following his initial appearance last March. Faiq awaits transfer to the Western District of Texas where he faces two counts of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and one substantive count of distribution of cocaine.

In another related matter this morning, U.S. Magistrate Judge Andrew Austin granted a request by Steve's brother, Mike Yassine, for a continuance of his detention hearing so that he could retain counsel. Judge Austin reset today's hearing for November 2, 2012. On Monday, a federal grand jury indictment was unsealed which charges Mike Yassine with three counts of filing a false income tax return. The indictment alleges that Mike Yassine submitted false tax returns for 2008, 2009 and 2010, whereby he understated by hundreds of thousands of dollars the gross receipts from his various nightclubs. Upon conviction, Mike Yassine faces up to five years in federal prison per tax count.

This investigation was conducted by agents and investigators with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and the Austin Police Department together with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Texas Attorney General's Office, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and the Texas Comptroller's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregg N. Sofer is prosecuting these cases on behalf of the Government. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alan Buie is also prosecuting the tax case against Mike Yassine on behalf of the Government.

An indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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