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CHARLESTON HUSBAND AND WIFE SENTENCED ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES

Police Find Charleston Couple with Crack While Responding to Suspected Drug Activity

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A Charleston couple was sentenced to prison today by United States District Judge Thomas E. Johnston on federal drug charges. Angela Ridley, 42, was sentenced to 15 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. The defendant's husband, Morris Ridley, 38, was sentenced to 41 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. Both husband and wife pleaded guilty in federal court in February 2010. Angela Ridley pleaded guilty to possessing nearly an ounce of crack cocaine with the intent to sell. Morris Ridley pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the fact to his wife's crime as a result of his initial false statement to authorities claiming ownership of the crack cocaine.

On July 23, 2008, plain clothes officers with the Charleston Police Department working near the 1600 block of Clay Avenue on Charleston's West Side observed a suspected drug transaction and approached the people involved. During the search, officers found a small bag containing cocaine base on the ground near Morris Ridley and placed him under arrest. Also at the scene, officers seized nearly an ounce of cocaine base from Angela Ridley, which she pulled from her front pants pocket. During the offense, Mrs. Ridley's two minor grandchildren were in her vehicle parked nearby.

Following their arrest, both Ridleys gave statements asserting that the crack belonged to Mr. Ridley. However, two months later, Mr. Ridley recanted his confession and asserted that his wife owned the crack. Mrs. Ridley followed up with a statement to investigators confirming that she purchased the ounce of crack for \$1,000, which she intended to sell to make money. Officers subsequently obtained recorded conversations between the pair confirming their most recent admissions, which stated that the ounce of crack belonged to Mrs. Ridley.

The investigation was conducted by members of the Drug Enforcement Administration and its forensic laboratory along with the Patrol Division of the Charleston Police Department.

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