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NICHOLAS COUNTY MAN SENTENCED FOR DISTRIBUTING MORPHINE

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – Jerry Austin Justus, 32, of Richwood, West Virginia was sentenced yesterday by United States District Judge Thomas E. Johnston to 61 months in prison for distribution of morphine and for carrying a nine-millimeter pistol during and in relation to a drug-trafficking crime.

On September 8, 2009, agents with the Central West Virginia Drug Task Force used a confidential informant to make a controlled purchase of narcotics from Justus. During this drug deal, Justus carried a nine-millimeter pistol clearly visible in a holster on his hip. Later that same day, agents executed a search warrant at Justus' residence, and Justus fled. As he ran, Justus discarded his wallet (containing his identification card), a red pouch containing \$1,049 in cash - including six bills of pre-recorded buy money from the earlier deal, and a fully loaded nine-millimeter pistol with a round chambered. Agents caught Justus nearby with an empty holster on his hip. During the search of the residence, agents seized several items, including an extra loaded magazine for the nine-millimeter pistol, a loaded .22 caliber pistol with extra ammunition in the same room where the drug deal took place, digital scales, morphine pills with a street value of \$3,100, other pills containing Schedule III and IV narcotics, and a small amount of cocaine.

The Central West Virginia Drug Task Force and the West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory conducted the investigation.

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