



Department of Justice

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A Department of Justice official said today that a conviction obtained in an important environmental protection case will have a significant deterrent effect nationally.

"It is the first time an individual has been convicted under the knowing endangerment provision of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act," Assistant Attorney General Roger J. Marzulla of the Land and Natural Resources Division said.

Marzulla said that [REDACTED] was found guilty on April 13 in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn of knowingly disposing of a hazardous waste, ethyl ether, and thus placing another person in imminent danger of death or serious bodily injury. The maximum penalty is 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. No date has been set for sentencing.

"The Justice Department expects that this case will have an important deterrent effect on those who purposefully dump hazardous wastes in a fashion that endangers innocent people," Marzulla said. "These offenses will be vigorously prosecuted wherever they occur.

"It also is significant to note that the conviction of [REDACTED] follows by only a few months the first conviction of a company, [REDACTED] for endangering human life

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through treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes," Marzulla said. " [REDACTED] has been fined \$440,000, ordered to place \$950,000 into a trust fund for three employees, and required to pay for hazardous waste cleanup."

The [REDACTED] case began when he purchased ethyl ether and was placed under surveillance by the Nassau County, New York, Police Department, which was working in cooperation with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Marzulla said.

Although ethyl ether has legitimate uses, it also is used in illegal drug manufacturing, the government said at the trial.

According to court proceedings, [REDACTED] detected the police surveillance and dumped three 55-gallon drums of ethyl ether, a highly flammable substance, in a vacant lot in a densely-populated residential area in Rockaway, Long Island. [REDACTED] of Valley Stream, New York, was indicted last July.

Marzulla said "This case involved remarkable cooperation by the Environmental Crimes Section of the Land and Natural Resources Division, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Attorney's Office in Brooklyn, DEA, Nassau County Police Department, and the New York City Police Department.

"We look forward to more cooperative cases with DEA, EPA, and other agencies involving the dumping of materials that could be used for illegal drug manufacturing," Marzulla said.

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