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MAJOR DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

Defendant Receives 170 Months in Federal Prison

LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today that a major drug trafficker was sentenced in federal court for drug trafficking charges. LAWRENCE WILLIS, III, age 43, of Richmond, Texas, was sentenced by United States District Judge Ivan L. R. Lemelle to spend 170 months in federal prison, and a term of 5 years supervised sentence following confinement.

LAWRENCE WILLIS was originally indicted in March 2005, along with co-defendant Timothy Paul Bridges, for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, and possession with intent to distribute cocaine. Timothy Bridges pled guilty in September 2006 to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine. While awaiting trial, WILLIS was indicted in a Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base, and possession with intent to distribute cocaine base. On March 9, 2009, WILLIS pled guilty to Count 1 of the Superseding Indictment for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base.

The investigation into WILLIS's drug trafficking activities began when law enforcement officials received information that Houston residents, Lawrence Willis and Timothy Bridges had been transporting crack cocaine from the Houston, Texas area into Louisiana. LAWRENCE WILLIS, III, a multiple kilogram supplier of cocaine, was ultimately held responsible for the conspiracy which funneled an excess of 4.5 kilograms of cocaine base to Morgan City and Lafayette. Other co-conspirators have been prosecuted and sentenced.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Agency and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Brett L. Grayson and Myers P. Namie.

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