

Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.
Western District of New York

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NIAGARA FALLS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG CHARGES

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Dennis Berard, 66, of Niagara Falls, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute marijuana and 500 grams or more cocaine. The charges carry a maximum penalty of life in prison, a \$8,000,000 fine or both

Assistant U.S. Attorney Melissa Meetze, who is handling the case, stated that the defendant was part of a drug conspiracy that involved the trafficking of marijuana from the Akwesasne Indian Reservation into Niagara Falls and the trafficking of cocaine from Buffalo into Niagara Falls.

Berard was arrested along with four others in April, 2011. Seven other defendants were arrested in June, 2011. Berard is the first to be convicted. During the arrests, law enforcement seized 17 firearms and more than \$75,000 in cash along with two kilograms of cocaine

The arrests are the culmination of an investigation on the part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations, Border Enforcement Security Task Force, under the direction of Lev J. Kubiak, the Niagara Falls Police Department under the direction of Chief John Chella, the Niagara County Sheriff's department, under the direction of Sheriff James Votour.

Berard will be sentenced in District Court before Judge Arcara on November 2, 2011 at 12:00pm.