



**U. S. Department of Justice**

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**FIFTH AND FINAL MEMBER OF LOCAL, MULTI-STATE DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON**

**PENSACOLA, FLORIDA** – Kevin C. Bui, of Fort Walton Beach, was sentenced yesterday to 78 months in federal prison following his August conviction on drug and money laundering conspiracy charges. Bui and four co-conspirators trafficked thousands of pounds of marijuana into North Florida from California and laundered hundreds of thousands of dollars in proceeds to send back to their supplier in California. Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the sentence.

“This man and his co-conspirators polluted North Florida with their drugs, then laundered the proceeds to be shipped out of state. Their federal prison sentences are key to disrupting and dismantling this drug trafficking organization,” U.S. Attorney Keefe said. “This case is another example of how federal, state, and local law enforcement can work effectively to put organizations like this out of business.”

After a 14-month investigation led by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in the Northern District of Florida, all five defendants have now been sentenced for their roles in the multi-state drug trafficking and money laundering organization, which operated in Florida, California, and elsewhere.

Bui and three other Florida-based defendants conspired with and relied upon a fifth defendant – the organization's California-based source of supply – to mail thousands of pounds of marijuana into the Northern District of Florida. In exchange, the Florida-based defendants funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash through bank accounts and purchased money orders and cashier's checks at local grocery and convenience stores with marijuana trafficking proceeds, in order to transfer the money back to the source in California. During the execution of search and arrest warrants, law enforcement seized thousands of dollars in United States currency, precious jewelry, controlled substances, and other items of significant value.

“So much crime is motivated by greed. IRS Special Agents play a unique role on task forces aimed at dismantling criminal enterprises: we follow the money. That’s exactly what we did in this case,” said Special Agent in Charge Brian Payne of Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation. “We are proud to add our financial investigative skills to this operation, and we commend the exemplary efforts of our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners in bringing these criminals to justice.”

Bui and his co-conspirators were each charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute marijuana and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. Bui’s co-conspirators all pled guilty to the charges, while Bui was convicted by a federal jury in August 2020. The sentences imposed for all five defendants are:

- Phi T. Nguyen, of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, 120 months in federal prison;
- Kevin C. Bui, of Fort Walton Beach, Florida, 78 months in federal prison;
- Larry Millard Harrison, II, of Mary Esther, Florida, 84 months in federal prison;
- Philip H. Ly, of Mary Esther, Florida, 60 months in federal prison; and
- Hoang B. Pham, of Temple City, California, 40 months in federal prison.

These prosecutions resulted from an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) operation that since the beginning of 2017 targeted a drug trafficking organization responsible for the distribution of marijuana throughout northern Florida. OCDETF is a joint federal, state, and local cooperative approach to combat drug trafficking. OCDETF is the nation’s primary tool for disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations, targeting national and regional-level drug trafficking organizations and coordinating the necessary law enforcement entities and resources to take down criminal organizations and seize assets.

“These traffickers funneled large amounts of illegal drugs into our Northwest Florida communities,” said FDLE Pensacola Special Agent in Charge Jack Massey. “I appreciate the hard work of our FDLE agents, members of the OCDETF and U.S. Attorney Keefe. There is no doubt that our community is a safer place with these traffickers behind bars.”

These sentences resulted from the collaborative work of the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the Okaloosa County Sheriff’s Office. Assistant United States Attorneys David L. Goldberg and Lazaro P. Fields prosecuted the cases.

The United States Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](https://www.uscourts.gov/court-locations/northern-district-of-florida) website. For more information about the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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