



Department of Justice

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TRIAL ENDS IN CONVICTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL HEROIN AND ECSTASY RING MEMBERS

Atlanta, GA - A jury in federal district court has returned guilty verdicts against ANDREW JONAH, 29, of Atlanta, Georgia; RICARDO WILSON, 30, of New Orleans, Louisiana; GEORGE RICHARDSON, 41, of Atlanta, Georgia, and PROSPER SENAO COKER-OFORI, 53, of Washington, D.C. in connection with an international ring smuggling heroin and ecstasy into the United States.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of yesterday's verdict, "Atlanta has become a primary hub for international drug operations. The investigation and convictions in this case demonstrate that we are dedicated to pursuing and locking up drug traffickers who cross our borders to peddle their poison in our communities."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: The jury found JONAH guilty of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute heroin, cocaine, and ecstasy. The jury also found him guilty of several charges relating to the distribution of heroin, and possession with intent to distribute ecstasy. The jury also found him guilty of two international money laundering charges. The jury found COKER-OFORI guilty of conspiracy to distribute heroin, and both WILSON and RICHARDSON guilty of conspiracy to distribute ecstasy. The jury also found WILSON guilty of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and possession of a firearm by an unlawful user of a controlled substance. Two other defendants were acquitted.

The arrests in this case resulted from a 15-month investigation led by agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration. That investigation involved agents from Atlanta, Washington, D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, London and South Africa. JONAH and COKER-OFORI are both Ghanaian nationals. JONAH used internal couriers who would swallow heroin in Ghana to smuggle it into the United States. JONAH also imported ecstasy from Canada for distribution in the Atlanta area.

Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Sherri F. Strange noted that "Ghana has become the major transshipment point for heroin coming into London and the United States. As a result of increased security at major international airports, heroin smugglers are less likely

to smuggle the heroin in their luggage and are more likely to ingest the heroin as a means to avoid detection when coming through customs. The successful prosecution of these drug traffickers has eliminated at least one pipeline of heroin into the United States.”

The defendants each face a minimum mandatory sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum fine of up to \$4,000,000. Sentencing will be set sometime in February 2007 before United States District Judge Orinda D. Evans.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the DEA.

Assistant United States Attorneys Carol M. Kayser and Jenny Turner prosecuted the case.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta recommends parents and children learn about the dangers of drugs at the following web site: www.justthinktwice.com.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.