



U.S. Department of Justice

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January 22, 2008

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Milad Knouna

**Detroit Party Store Operator Sentenced to 12 Months
and One Day After Pleading Guilty to Structuring Cash Transactions**

Milad Knouna, 54, of Commerce Township, Michigan, officer and operator of Diamond Liquor Store, Detroit, Michigan, was sentenced today to one year and one day in prison as a result of his pleading guilty to an information charging him with structuring transactions to evade reporting requirements, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced.

In sentencing Knouna, U.S. District Judge Arthur J. Tarnow ordered Knouna to pay a \$30,000 fine and serve one year of supervised release.

Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division, Robert Corso, Special Agent in Charge, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

According to court records, between February and June, 2003, Knouna met with undercover agents and knowingly wire transferred cash that was represented to be from drug

proceeds. Knouna used the Western Union machine from the Diamond Liquor Store. After receiving cash amounts of over \$10,000, Knouna would structure the amount, usually about \$2,500 per wire transfer, in order to evade the reporting requirements. These reporting requirements include a Currency Transaction Report for cash transactions over \$10,000, filed with the Internal Revenue Service, and the maintenance of a log for cash transactions over \$3,000. During this time period, structured cash transactions totaled over \$139,000.

United States Attorney Murphy said, "Structuring monetary transactions is a serious crime. This crime fosters other crimes because of the need to hide the source of the money from illegal activity. We will not tolerate the hiding of ill gotten gains from the government."

Special Agent in Charge Aouate said, "Structuring, a crime of greed, is a very serious offense, especially when it makes it easier for drug dealers to benefit from their illegal activities."

United States Attorney Murphy thanked the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, United States Drug Enforcement Administration and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their investigation of the case. The United States was represented by Assistant United States Attorney David J. Portelli and Graham L. Teall.