



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Geretha Lee et al

**TWO INDIANA RESIDENTS FOUND GUILTY OF IMPORTING 6,000
METHAMPHETAMINE AND ECSTACY PILLS INTO THE UNITED STATES**

Two Indiana residents were found guilty today of importing 6,000 methamphetamine and ecstasy pills into the United States through the Detroit/Windsor Tunnel by a federal jury in Detroit, Acting United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Gurdit Dhillon, Director of Field Operations, Customs and Border Protection Service and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Found guilty were Geretha Lee, 31, of Indianapolis, Indiana, and Ricardo Vargas, 31, of Hammond, Indiana.

The jury deliberated over the course of one day before returning the verdict, concluding a five day trial before United States District Judge Patrick J. Duggan.

The evidence presented during the trial showed that during the late night hours of May 17, 2008, Lee entered the United States alone from Canada through the Detroit/Windsor Tunnel. U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers inspected Lee's rental car and discovered 6,000 methamphetamine and ecstasy pills worth over \$90,000 concealed inside the body of the car. Special Agents for ICE then responded to the Tunnel during the early morning hours of May 18, 2008. Vargas, who was Lee's boyfriend, was arrested after he approached the car at 2:45 a.m. on May 18, at a store on East Jefferson Avenue in Detroit. ICE Special Agents had placed Lee's car at the location in an effort to identify co-conspirators working with Lee to import the pills into the United States.

Lee took the stand during the trial and denied any knowledge of the pills concealed in her rental car. Vargas told agents after his arrest that he was not involved with the pills, but that he had just happened upon his girlfriend Lee's rental car after Lee had traveled to the Windsor Casino, leaving Vargas behind in Detroit.

In its verdict, the jury found Lee and Vargas guilty of conspiring to import and to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine and ecstasy. In addition, both Lee and Vargas were convicted of importing and possessing with

intent to distribute the 6,000 pills. Finally, Vargas was convicted of attempting to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine and ecstasy.

All five charges are felonies, and all five charges carry maximum sentences of life imprisonment.

A date for the sentencing hearing for both defendants will be set by the Court. Because of a prior drug trafficking conviction and the amount of methamphetamine involved in the offenses, Vargas is facing a mandatory minimum sentence of twenty year imprisonment. Lee faces a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years imprisonment because of the amount of methamphetamine involved. Lee and Vargas also face possible fines of \$4,000,000 on each count of conviction.

Acting United States Attorney Berg said, “The jury’s verdict today should give pause to anyone thinking about attempting to smuggle methamphetamine and ecstasy across our borders from Canada. They should realize that justice will be swift and the potential penalties will be significant.”

The case was investigated by agents of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement and officers of United States Customs and Border Protection. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David A. Gardey.