



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

Colm F. Connolly, United States Attorney for the District of Delaware, announced today the filing of charges against three defendants arising from their participation in a marijuana distribution conspiracy and operation of a Dover-based "head shop" - a business that sells drug paraphernalia. Connolly noted that this is the first prosecution in the District of Delaware brought under the federal statute which prohibits the sale or offer for sale of drug paraphernalia, including such marijuana-smoking devices as bongs and pipes. A federal search warrant executed at Teragwens Leather Toys and Lace, 1044 South Dupont Highway, Dover, on March 16, 2005, resulted in the seizure of hundreds of bongs and pipes, as well as smoking masks, roach clips, digital scales, and urine cleansing kits. Illegal drug users commonly employ such paraphernalia to smoke marijuana. In addition, certain paraphernalia, such as digital scales, are commonly used by illegal drug traffickers to weigh quantities of drugs for distribution. "Head shops often operate under the guise of legitimate businesses," Connolly stated, "when in fact their primary purpose is to facilitate the illegal drug trade. Not only do these shops provide drug users and dealers with ready access to a host of tools for ingesting and distributing drugs, they offer products, such as urine testing kits, designed to conceal illegal drug use from law enforcement, employers and schools."

Connolly said that the charges in question demonstrate the commitment that law enforcement in the District of Delaware places on the prosecution of individuals who participate in the illegal drug trade, either by selling drugs or drug paraphernalia. The federal grand jury sitting in Wilmington today returned Indictments charging Robert Cooke, age 47, of Dover, Delaware, with conspiracy to distribute marijuana, distribution of marijuana, possession with intent to distribute marijuana, and offering for sale drug

paraphernalia; Gwennette Bowman, age 50, of Georgetown, Delaware, with conspiracy to distribute marijuana, distribution of marijuana, and offering for sale drug paraphernalia; and Kenneth Bowman, age 50, of Georgetown, Delaware, with conspiracy to distribute marijuana.<sup>1</sup> The charges against the defendants carry maximum penalties of 23 years for Robert Cooke, 18 years for Gwennette Bowman and 5 years for Kenneth Bowman.

U.S. Attorney Connolly commended the Delaware State Police and Drug Enforcement Administration for their efforts in successfully investigating the case, and thanked the Dover Police Department, Smyrna Police Department, and Delaware Office of Probation and Parole for their valuable assistance.

For further information, contact United States Attorney Colm F. Connolly.

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<sup>1</sup> An indictment is only an accusation. A defendant is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.