



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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May 26, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Pleas

DEFENDANTS: DAMONNE BRANTLEY, 35, Atlanta, Georgia
REGINALD DANCY, 35, Detroit, Michigan
RAYSHON BRAGGS, 32, Atlanta, Georgia
DARRYL GOODEN, 34, Birmingham, Alabama
MORRIS WALLER, II, 37, Detroit, Michigan
SHERARD KING, 32, Detroit, Michigan
LEONARD RAY BRANTLEY, JR., 38, Detroit, Michigan
RORY D. JONES, 38, Detroit, Michigan

Major Drug Traffickers Plead Guilty

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced that eight residents of Detroit, Michigan and Atlanta, Georgia entered a plea of guilty in federal court to charges that they participated in a large volume cocaine distribution conspiracy during the period of 1990 - 2003 in Detroit, Atlanta and Birmingham, Alabama. The indictment charged that the operation involved at least 1,000 kilograms and proceeds of at least \$20 million and that the group used violence, threats, and firearms to protect the drug trafficking activities of the enterprise. The group operated through the illegal activities of two gangs known as the "Detroit Boys" in Birmingham, AL, and the "Puritan Avenue Gang" in Detroit.

Entering guilty pleas before United States District Judge Nancy G. Edmunds were **Damonne Brantley, Reginald Dancy, Rayshon Braggs, Darryl Gooden, Morris Waller, II,**

Sherard King, and Leonard Ray Brantley. Rory D. Jones, who was also charged in the case, entered a guilty plea to conspiring to distribute marijuana in a case before United States District Judge Victoria A. Roberts. Dancy also entered a guilty plea to the marijuana conspiracy case before Judge Roberts. Mr. Murphy stated that, “The information presented to the court during the case showed that the defendants not only sold large quantities of cocaine which reached the streets of these cities but also used intimidation and violence to promote their illegal business. The prosecution of the activities of this gang, whose members had operated with virtual impunity for many years, contributes to the safety of the people of Detroit, Atlanta and Birmingham.”

Murphy added that “Sentencing of the defendants will take place on a date to be set by the court. Damonne Brantley, Reginald Dancy, and Rayshon Braggs each face a penalty of 20 years in prison or a fine of \$4 million, or both. Darryl Gooden, Sherard King, and Morris Waller, II face penalties of up to 10 years in prison or a fine of \$4 million. Leonard Ray Brantley, Jr. who pled guilty to money laundering charges, faces a sentence of up to three years and a fine of up to \$30,000. Rory D. Jones faces a penalty of up to 151 months and fine of \$4 million. The sentences will be imposed under the United States Sentence Guidelines according to the nature of the offense and the criminal background, if any, of the defendant.”

Murphy congratulated the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, for the successful conclusion of their three-year investigation and thanked the Detroit Police Department and other state and local law enforcement departments all over the country for their substantial assistance in this prosecution. Prosecution of this case was handled by Assistant United States Attorney’s Ross Parker and Carl Gilmer-Hill. Defendants Damonne Brantley, Reginald Dancy, Rayshon Braggs and Darryl Gooden continue to be detained, and the other defendants' bonds were continued.



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June 9, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Verdict

Defendant: Lawrence Sales

**ROMULUS RESIDENT CONVICTED
IN FEDERAL COURT FOR
GUNS, DRUGS AND AMMUNITION**

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, and Valerie J. Goddard, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, announced today that Lawrence Sales, also known as "Pee Wee", a 37-year-old resident of Romulus, Michigan, was found guilty today by a federal jury in Detroit on charges of Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute; Possession of a Firearm in Furtherance of a Drug Trafficking Crime; and being a felon in possession of 3 firearms and numerous rounds of ammunition.

The verdict was announced after the jury deliberated for approximately 75 minutes, concluding a three-day trial held before United States District Court Judge Bernard A. Friedman.

The evidence presented at trial showed that on July 10, 2003, detectives from the Romulus Police Department's Narcotics Unit, assisted by the Downriver Special Weapons and Tactics team (SWAT) and agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and

Explosives executed a state search warrant, previously obtained by the Romulus detectives, at the defendant's home located at 11320 Whitehorn, Romulus, Michigan. During the ensuing search of the premises, which was occupied by the defendant, his girlfriend, and three children under the age of ten at the time, officers found a variety of weapons, ammunition, marijuana, and an assortment of items used for the packaging and distribution of narcotics. Some of the ammunition was loaded into assault-style rifle "banana clips".

More specifically, the detectives found a loaded .357 magnum revolver, a 12 gauge shotgun, a .25 caliber semi-automatic pistol, scales, plastic bags, walkie-talkies, and 244 rounds of ammunition, including 9 mm, .38 special, .357 magnum, .32 caliber, .25 caliber, .380 caliber, .45 caliber, 12 and 16 gauge shotgun, and 7.62 x 39 assault-style rifle ammunition.

Subsequent investigation by ATF agents and Romulus Narcotics Unit detectives revealed, among other things, that the defendant has been selling marijuana, which he obtains in Inkster, Michigan, since he was about 13 years old. Investigation also revealed that the assault style "banana clips" and ammunition belonged to an AK-47 assault-style rifle which the defendant reportedly sold to another individual.

"Drug and illegal gun possession are the two most dangerous threats to the safety for the people of Southeast Michigan, including our law enforcement officers," stated SAC Goddard. "That's why we are aggressively working to attack this problem by removing habitual offenders from our streets."

United States Attorney Murphy stated, "This case is another example of the excellent team-work among local and federal agencies in Southeast Michigan to take guns and drugs off our streets. In particular, I would like to commend the detectives, agents, and forensic experts from the Romulus Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Michigan State Police", stated United States Attorney Murphy. Murphy also noted that "my office is firmly committed to working with federal, state, and local agencies to aggressively bring to justice felons that continue to violate the law by possessing guns and drugs they intend to sell."

Special Agent in Charge Goddard also praised the cooperative efforts of the agencies

involved. She stated, "The partnership and coordination between local and federal law enforcement gives us the tools to target repeat, dangerous offenders who need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent possible for the safety and benefit of our neighborhoods which they threaten."

Assistant United States Attorney John Freeman prosecuted the case. Sentencing of Mr. Sales is scheduled for October 3, 2005.



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Carolyn Gibson - DEA (313) 234-4220
Stephen Moore - IRS (313) 234-2410

June 9, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Verdict

Defendant: Byron Jones,

NINETEEN DEFENDANTS CHARGED WITH DRUG TRAFFICKING

A 49 year old former resident of Detroit was found guilty today by a federal jury in Detroit on charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine and money laundering, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by John Arvanitis, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Maurice Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

Found guilty was Bryon Jones. Jones is one of nineteen defendants who had been charged as a member of a large scale, long term cocaine distribution and money laundering operation involving in excess of 150 kilograms of cocaine and in over 1.5 million dollars.

Fourteen defendants have already pleaded guilty to drug, money laundering and other related charges and are currently awaiting sentencing. Two more defendants are awaiting trial and charges against two other defendants were dismissed. Those defendants who pleaded guilty include:

Riley Graham, 39, of Detroit, Michigan

Shannon Lee, 35, of Nashville, Tennessee

David Barnett, 40, of Detroit, Michigan

Dennis Williams, 55 of Detroit, Michigan

Julia Carter, 33, of California

Quianna Wasler, 26 of Washington, Pennsylvania

Ozro Graham, 32, of Detroit, Michigan

Alicia Newsome, 31, of California

Toi Horn, 34, of Maryland

Elliott Brown, 38, of Detroit, Michigan

Michael Mosley, 34, of Detroit, Michigan

Darryl James, 40, of Detroit, Michigan

Darnell Jackson, 35, of Detroit, Michigan

Kyle Stevens, 47, of Detroit, Michigan

The verdict was delivered after the jury had deliberated for approximately three hours, concluding a five-day trial held before United States District Judge Marianne O. Battani.

Evidence presented at the five-day trial and provided during the guilty pleas showed that from about 1991 through 1998, Riley Graham and his associates would travel to and from

California, Georgia, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Tennessee, Ohio and Michigan to distribute large amounts of cocaine.

The evidence revealed that the organization devised a unique way of shipping the drugs and drug proceeds across the United States in an attempt to avoid its detection by law enforcement. Initially, the defendants encased the various kilograms of cocaine, which had been compressed into hockey puck shaped packets, in wax (giving the appearance to be a large candle) and shipped it as a "special gift" with a box full of clothing to various clothing stores in the greater Detroit area that had been purchased by the organization to be used as a business front (fraudulent businesses such as clothing stores - the Nine Mile Partnership, T Clothing Company, Active Wear Company, Bonnets Men and Women's Boutique, and Barnett International Freight Forwarding Company). A majority of these "candles" of cocaine were shipped via United Parcel Service from a mail box company (The Business and Postal Center) that was purchased as a business front, by Bryon Jones, in the false name of Brian Simms, for the organization in Beverly Hills, California. As owners of this mail box company the members of the organization were able to ship these boxes without raising suspicion, could track their progress to assure they were properly delivered, and would be notified if the police intercepted them. By using the phone business "fronts", the drug organization not only concealed the interstate transfer of cocaine proceeds, they also created a false cover to make it appear that their new found wealth from drug trafficking actually came from legitimate sources.

However, once the organization learned that law enforcement had discovered the existence of the business fronts in Michigan and California, they abandoned the businesses and modified their method of operation. They then began placing the candles containing the compressed cocaine within wicker baskets with other items to give the appearance that they

were gift baskets. These gift baskets were then addressed to legitimate businesses located within a certain area in Oak Park, Michigan. Oak Park, Michigan was important because before these gift baskets were delivered to innocent businesses, United Parcel Service (UPS) employee, who had been hired by the drug organization and worked in Oak Park, would intercept the packages containing the drugs and deliver the packages to the various other members of the conspiracy located in the Greater Detroit area. These candles were not only shipped from California to Michigan, but to Tennessee, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. The drug proceeds were then shipped back in candles or wire transferred in large amounts via Western Union to and from Michigan, California, Tennessee, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Georgia and Saint Lucia, West Indies for the purpose of promoting the on-going drug distribution activities. According to witnesses involved in the drug distribution organization, Riley Graham and his associates were responsible for shipping over 100 parcels (over 100 kilograms of cocaine) from California to his business fronts in Detroit alone.

After the DEA in Detroit learned about this method of shipping the cocaine encased in candles, Riley Graham moved the hub of his drug operation to Nashville, Tennessee where he started a trucking company which he used to ship larger quantities of cocaine across the United States. The investigation likewise revealed, as part of the plan to hide his money, that Riley Graham had various members of his organization transport or wire large amounts of drug money to an associate in Saint Lucia, West Indies, in an effort to build and develop the first casino resort on the island of Saint Lucia.

“Today’s guilty verdict brings to a close what was once a large scale drug trafficking organization operating in our district,” stated U.S. Attorney Murphy. “The successful prosecution of this case highlights the aggressiveness which my office works to free our communities of drugs and those who traffic in them.”

"Drug trafficking organizations use innovative means and any form of disguise to transport drugs and drug proceeds," stated Acting Special Agent in Charge John Arvanitis. "This organization was extremely unique in its concealment methods. This investigation successfully disrupted this organization not only in its drug trafficking capacity but also in its money laundering capabilities."

“IRS Criminal Investigation has a unique role in targeting the financial motives of drug traffickers, with the goal of permanently dismantling the drug organizations,” stated SAC Aouate.

U.S. Attorney Murphy commended the cooperative efforts of the agents from the DEA and IRS along with Assistant United States Attorneys Ronald Waterstreet and Regina McCullough for their hard work and dedication to this case.



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May 18, 2005

EVENT: Guilty Verdict

Defendant: Sadeq Naji Ahmed

**FORMER TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
SCREENER FOUND GUILTY FOR MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS**

A 26 year old resident of Dearborn, Michigan was found guilty today by a federal jury in Detroit on charges of making false statements to the Office of Personnel Management, an agency of the executive branch of government of the United States, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Robert Ball, Federal Security Director at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, and Special Agent in Charge Daniel D. Roberts, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Detroit Division.

Found guilty was Sadeq Naji Ahmed, a former screener at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

The verdict was delivered after the jury had deliberated for approximately four hours, concluding a two day trial held before United States District Judge Bernard A. Friedman.

The evidence presented at the two day trial showed that on October 3, 2002, while a TSA screener at the Detroit Metro airport, Mr. Ahmed made false statements on a security background investigation form. The evidence demonstrated that he falsely stated that he had never had a security clearance suspended when in fact he had his security clearance and access to classified information suspended in 2001 while he was a member of the United States Air Force at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. He was also found guilty of falsely stating that he had not left a job under unfavorable conditions when, in fact, he left the Air Force because, among other things, he made statements in support of Usama bin Laden; that he

was neither for nor against the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center; that the United States deserved the September 11, 2001 attacks; that he would not fight with the U.S. military if the U.S. took action in Iraq; and that U.S. aircraft flying over Iraq should crash. When these false statements were discovered, defendant's employment with TSA was terminated.

"This case clearly demonstrates my office's commitment to aggressively prosecute any individuals who knowingly makes false statements in conjunction with their federal employment" stated United States Attorney Murphy. "Every traveler through Detroit Metro Airport should feel confident that the government is taking steps to ensure that all federal employees in charge of security are held to higher standards."

Special Agent Roberts praised the work of the investigators of the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) for putting this case together.

Sentencing of Mr. Ahmed is scheduled for August 22, 2005.

The case was investigated by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Transportation Security Administration.



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June 14, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Mahmoud Youssef Kourani

Dearborn Man Sentenced in Conspiracy to Provide Support to Hizballah

Mahmoud Youssef Kourani, 34, formerly of Dearborn, Michigan and Yater, Lebanon was sentenced today in Detroit federal court to 54 months imprisonment, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Kourani pleaded guilty on March 1, 2005 to the charge of Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to the Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, Hizballah. The sentence was handed down by United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The information presented to the court at the time of the guilty plea showed that Mahmoud Kourani organized and hosted meetings at his Dearborn residence during Ramadan of 2002. The meetings featured guest speakers from Lebanon, who solicited the participants to make donations to Hizballah. Pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, effective October 8, 1997, the Secretary of State designated Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization by finding that the organization is a foreign organization that engages in terrorist

activity threatening the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States. Hizballah, also known as "Party of God," also known as "Islamic Jihad," among other names, is a worldwide terrorist network based in Lebanon which has conducted numerous high profile terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. The money solicited by Kourani's conspiracy was intended to support Hizballah's "orphans of martyrs" program to benefit the families of those killed in Hizballah terrorist operations or by Hizballah's enemies.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, who originally arrested Kourani in the summer of 2003. The prosecution was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell.

"This case underscores the seriousness with which my office, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security view terrorist fund raising as well as our strong commitment to investigating and prosecuting these types of cases," said United States Attorney Murphy. "Raising money for Hizballah, or any other designated terrorist organization, is a serious crime which has been, and will continue to be, vigorously pursued in the Eastern District of Michigan."

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said "This matter represents how effective law enforcement and intelligence agencies can be when combining resources and working together. I join our partner in Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the United States Attorney's Office in commending all investigative personnel in their efforts in achieving this exceptional result."

"This case should send a clear message to those who seek to provide material support to terrorist organizations," stated SAC Moskowitz. "ICE, as a partner in the Joint Terrorism Task Force will not hesitate to use the nation's immigration laws or any tool at our disposal in order to keep America safe."

Kourani has already been ordered deported to Lebanon following service of his sentence.



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June 14, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Riza Selenica

Birmingham Dry Cleaner's Diverted Income Scheme Lands Him in Jail

Riza Selenica, 38, of Birmingham, Michigan was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment, followed by two years supervised release announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy. Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Maurice Aouate, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation .

Mr. Selenica was also fined \$30,000 and must cooperate with the Internal Revenue Service in filing all his tax returns and pay all back taxes, including interest and penalties. The sentence was handed down by United States District Court Judge Robert H. Cleland.

According to court records, during 1996 through 1998, Mr. Selenica owned and operated Euro Express, a dry cleaning and shirt laundering business, which were located in Birmingham and Southfield, Michigan. Several customers paid for his laundry services in the form of checks. Rather than deposit these checks into his business bank account and report it as income, he took them to a local check cashing service where they were negotiated for cash. During these years, Mr. Selenica filed false 1996, 1997 and 1998 federal income tax returns claiming \$0.00 gross income or, as on the 1998 return, showing gross income of \$48,747, when his joint taxable income with his spouse during those years totaled over \$980,000. Total tax loss to the Internal Revenue Service was calculated at approximately \$325,000.

Mr. Aouate stated, "Intentionally diverting income and not paying your fair share in taxes is a serious IRS matter that can have severe consequences, including imprisonment. IRS Criminal Investigation will continue to direct their efforts at the portion of Americans who

willfully and intentionally violate this known legal duty. "

Mr. Murphy commended the special agents of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation for their work in this investigation. Assistant United States Attorneys Richard L. Delonis prosecuted the case.



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June 17, 2005

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Allan Kuehnemund

INSURANCE FRAUD MAN SENTENCED

Allan A. Kuehnemund, age 56, a resident of Au Gres, Michigan, was sentenced on June 15, 2005 by U.S. District Judge David M. Lawson, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

Kuehnemund was convicted by a jury on March 4, 2005 on all charges in a 16 count indictment which alleged various types of crop insurance fraud.

Kuehnemund was ordered to serve 87 months (7 1/4 years) in federal custody, to be followed by 3 years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay \$2,288,383 in restitution and a special assessment of \$1,600.

Mr. Murphy commended the United States Department of Agriculture for its investigation of which led to the successful prosecution of this case.