



Department of Justice

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**CUNNINGHAM SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON FOR MAKING
FALSE CLAIMS THAT ADULTERATED SOUP HE FED
HIS CHILDREN WAS FACTORY CONTAMINATED**

Atlanta, GA - WILLIAM ALLEN CUNNINGHAM, 41, of Stockbridge, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Court Judge Julie E. Carnes on a charge of communicating false information that soup he fed his children had been factory contaminated when, in fact, CUNNINGHAM himself tampered with the soup before feeding it to his young children. CUNNINGHAM was sentenced to five years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release, and was ordered to have no further contact with the children or his ex-wife.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of the case, "It is tragic that a parent would intentionally harm his own children in an attempt to reap a financial gain. This defendant admitted that he put potentially life-threatening foreign substances into soup which he fed to his two young children, and then falsely claimed that the soup had been contaminated at the factory in hopes of a financial recovery. We have done what we can do to bring Mr. Cunningham to justice in the federal system. Today, Mr. Cunningham was sentenced to a significant prison sentence without possibility of parole for his crime."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: On January 1 and January 15, 2006, CUNNINGHAM fed his children, then ages 3 years and 18 months, Campbell's soup. Prior to feeding them the soup, CUNNINGHAM tampered with the soup by placing foreign substances, including hot peppers and lighter fluid, into the soup. On both occasions, the children became ill and had to be taken to the emergency room for treatment. On January 20, 2006, CUNNINGHAM called the Campbell's Soup Company and falsely claimed that the soup he fed his own children had been tampered with, knowing full well that he was the one who placed the foreign substances into the soup. Then, on July 29, 2006, CUNNINGHAM again forced his children to eat Campbell's soup, which he had contaminated with prescription drugs. As a result of that poisoning incident, his son was treated at the local hospital and daughter was rushed by life-flight helicopter to a hospital in Atlanta.

CUNNINGHAM was indicted by a federal grand jury in July 2006. He pleaded guilty to the false claims charge. CUNNINGHAM entered a plea agreement under which the Government recommended that he receive the statutory maximum sentence of 5 years in prison although the usual federal sentencing guidelines for this crime is 1 year, 6 months to 2 years. In court, CUNNINGHAM had requested a sentence of no less than 4 years in prison.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of Food and Drug Administration, Investigators of the United States Department of Agriculture, and Detectives of the Clayton County Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Aaron M. Danzig prosecuted the case.

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.