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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MEMBERS OF LARGE DRUG ORGANIZATION CONVICTED OF
DRUG, GUN AND MONEY LAUNDERING CHARGES**

Greenbelt, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Allen F. Loucks announces that yesterday a federal jury convicted defendants Deone Antonio Melvin, age 26, of Lanham, Maryland, Ramone Stephon Jones, age 27, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Stephon Mason, age 31, of Fort Washington, Maryland and Adrian Alexander, age 28, of Suitland, Maryland of a variety of drug conspiracy, money laundering and gun charges. The defendants now face penalties of up to life imprisonment.

According to evidence presented at trial, the defendants used numerous vehicles equipped with sophisticated hidden compartments to transport hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from the New York area to the Maryland-D.C. area from 1997 through 2003. According to the testimony presented at trial, the defendants, beginning in the late 1990s, initiated contact with a drug supplier in New York, and continued, over a number of years, to obtain hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from him, as well as vehicles equipped with hidden compartments. During the investigation, several of the vehicles containing compartments were seized by law enforcement officers. The evidence at trial included wiretapped recordings of the defendants, and numerous guns seized from the

defendants' homes.

These convictions are the culmination of a lengthy joint investigation by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the Prince George's County Police Department and the United States Attorney's Office which began in 2001. Over the last two years, several other charged defendants have pleaded guilty to drug, money laundering and/or gun charges, including Francisco Despiau of New York, New York, Marvin Hall of Bowie, Maryland, Ellis Matthews of Glen Burnie, Maryland, Harold McDade of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Audrey Melvin of Lanham, Maryland, Antonio Mines of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, George Norris of Riverdale, Maryland, Shadita Sweeney of Washington, D.C., Lyle Kent Wade of Washington, D.C., Bennie Wilder of Capitol Heights, Maryland and Dadrian Williams of Largo, Maryland. Defendant Jermaine Wilson is pending trial.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Mythili Raman and Jason M. Weinstein.