

NEWS RELEASE

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TWO WEST VIRGINIA MEN CONVICTED OF MULTIPLE CONSPIRACIES

Deaths Resulted from Drug Distribution Activities

A. Courtney Cox, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that a federal trial jury on Wednesday, October 29, 2008, convicted two West Virginia men on charges of (1) Conspiracy to Commit Pharmacy Burglaries; and (2) Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances. The jury also found, in special verdicts, that four deaths resulted from the activities related to the drug distribution conspiracy.

REXI. HATFIELD, age 52, and his brother, **EVERLY K. HATFIELD**, age 48, both residents of Oceana, West Virginia, were convicted in U.S. District Court in East St. Louis, Illinois, following a three and one-half week jury trial. The trial began on October 6, 2008. Over 100 witnesses testified for the Government during the trial.

According to the testimony of multiple witnesses, the Hatfields led a group which committed approximately 85 pharmacy burglaries in 10 states, including a dozen burglaries in Southern Illinois, and at least five in Missouri. Among these were pharmacies in Flora, Eldorado, Fairfield, Mattoon, Metropolis, and Carmi, Illinois, and in St. Charles, Crestwood, Seneca, and St. Joseph, Missouri.

Multiple witnesses testified at trial that the Hatfields and their associates stole pain pills such as oxycontin, morphine patches (fentanyl) and other controlled substances valued in excess of \$500,000 between 1998 and 2004.

The evidence suggested that the Hatfields transported the stolen pharmaceuticals back to West Virginia and Virginia, where the drugs were sold to drug dealers working for the Hatfields.

The jury returned special verdict forms which found the Hatfields' activities resulted in the drug overdose deaths of Deborah Smith in Honaker, Virginia in 2001; Mark Honaker in Lebanon, Virginia in 2000; Carol Walker in Glen Fork, West Virginia in 2002; and Jimmy Dishmon (the Hatfields' brother-in-law) in Oceana, West Virginia in 2003.

According to multiple witnesses who testified at trial, the Hatfields suspected Smith and Walker of being police informants. Walker died just a week before she was scheduled to testify against Everly Hatfield on a West Virginia state felony charge of "Distribution of Oxycontin." According to eyewitnesses, the Hatfields had bragged after Smith and Walker died, claiming that they had prevented Smith and Walker from testifying against them.

The jury also returned a Special Verdict form holding the Hatfields responsible for causing life-threatening drug-related injuries to Richard Ward on October 18, 2003, in Glen White, West Virginia. Witnesses testified that the Hatfields believed Ward was about to testify against them concerning a pharmacy burglary that the Hatfields and Ward had committed in Princeton, West Virginia. According to eyewitnesses, when Ward collapsed and stopped breathing after a drug injection, Everly Hatfield stated, "Let him die. Don't revive him."

Because 4 deaths resulted from their drug distribution activities, the Defendants face a possible term of life imprisonment at their sentence hearings, which are scheduled for January 30, 2009.

The 4-year investigation which resulted in the conviction of the Hatfields was conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Madison County, Illinois Sheriff's Department; the Oceana, West Virginia Police Department; and the Russell County, Virginia Sheriff's Department.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Robert L. Garrison and Nicole E. Gorovsky.