



**U.S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales*  
*District of New Mexico*

**PRESS RELEASE**

---

**CONTACTS:**

**Albuquerque**

Elizabeth Martinez  
Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Public Affairs Officer  
elizabeth.martinez@usdoj.gov  
505.224.1469

**Las Cruces**

Terri Abernathy  
Senior Litigation Counsel  
terri.abernathy@usdoj.gov  
575.522.2338 ext. 233

**For Immediate Release**

**February 29, 2012**

**ILLINOIS MAN SENTENCED TO 105 MONTHS IN PRISON**  
**FOR 42 POUNDS MARIJUANA CONSPIRACY**

LAS CRUCES – This morning, a federal judge in Las Cruces sentenced **Mario Devonne Washington, Sr.**, 32, of Rockford, Ill., to 105 months of imprisonment for conspiring to possess marijuana with the intent to distribute. Washington, who pled guilty to the charge on March 15, 2011, will serve a four-year term of supervised release after he completes his prison sentence.

U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Washington and two co-defendants, **Alicia Unger**, 24, of Galesburg, Ill., and **Michael Martin**, 26, of Dubuque, Iowa, were arrested on marijuana trafficking charges on August 24, 2010, after U.S. Border Patrol agents found 42 pounds of marijuana in a car driven by Unger.

According to the criminal complaint filed in the case, at around 2:00 a.m. on August 24, 2010, a U.S. Border Patrol agent saw two cars traveling together on Highway 26 near Hatch, N.M. As the agent followed the vehicles, the lead car sped up and drove off. The agent stopped the other car, driven by Alicia Unger, 24, of Galesburg, Ill. Inside the trunk of the car, agents discovered 42 pounds of marijuana. At about the same time that the agent discovered the marijuana, Unger used her cellular telephone to send the following text to another telephone: “go in to jail.” Thereafter, U.S. Border Patrol agents located the car that had sped away, which was parked at a motel in Truth or Consequences, N.M. After the agents arrested Washington and Martin at the motel, the agents found a smashed cellular telephone in their motel room. It was the phone that had received the “go in to jail” text from Unger.

Court filings reflect that this marijuana transport was not an isolated incident. Before his arrest, Washington organized the transportation of as many as ten drug loads from Arizona and New Mexico to Iowa and Illinois.

Unger, who pled guilty on February 22, 2011, was sentenced to 113 days and three years of supervised release on May 2, 2011. Martin, who pled guilty on Dec. 29, 2010, was sentenced to 30 months in prison and two years of supervised release on April 26, 2011.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Border Patrol and the Drug Enforcement Administration, and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Renee L. Camacho and Sarah M. Davenport.

###

12-64