



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland
Northern Division*

*Rod J. Rosenstein
United States Attorney*

*36 South Charles Street
Fourth Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201*

*DIRECT: 410-209-4912
MAIN: 410-209-4800
FAX: 410-962-3091
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

*Vickie E. LeDuc
Assistant United States Attorney*

May 8, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
www.usdoj.gov/usao/md

**CONTACT AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or
MARCIA MURPHY at (410) 209-4885**

UPPER MARLBORO MAN CONVICTED ON ALL COUNTS

IN MULTI-COUNTY DRUG OPERATION

Headed 19 Member Drug Organization

GREENBELT, Maryland - A federal jury convicted Lester Fletcher, age 51, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland today of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute controlled substances, distribution and possession with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine, conspiracy to money launder and money laundering, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. The jury also ordered Fletcher to forfeit \$4.3 million in cash.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "Today's conviction arises from a two-year joint investigation by ATF and the Prince George's County Police Department, and shuts down a significant drug operation that operated in Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Charles and Calvert counties."

Acting Special Agent in Charge for the Baltimore Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, David McCain stated, "Once again this case highlights what happens when law enforcement works together. We've put violent criminals in jail, just as we said we would. We will continue with our joint efforts to ensure the safety of all the residents of Prince George's County."

According to evidence presented during the two week trial, from about 2002 to April 2005, Fletcher at least once a week purchased kilogram amounts of cocaine from suppliers in Prince George's County, and cooked some of that cocaine into crack cocaine for distribution through

two crack houses he operated in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Most of the cocaine was sold out of those locations to cocaine addicts, some of whom purchased large enough quantities for further distribution in other counties.

Trial evidence also established that Fletcher operated Big Mann's Towing & Auto Repair (Big Mann's) located in Upper Marlboro and together with Brenda Fletcher, age 34, used Big Mann's Towing to launder drug money. They opened a checking account in the name of Big Mann's

and deposited proceeds from narcotics distribution activities, commingling the narcotics distribution proceeds with the proceeds of legitimate towing and auto repair services. They used monies from the account to purchase automobiles and other personal property, and real property, in their names, their business and third parties.

Lester Fletcher faces a maximum sentence of life and a \$4 million fine for conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine; a minimum mandatory term of imprisonment of 20 years on each count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine; a maximum term of 20 years in prison for money laundering conspiracy; and 20 years on each count of money laundering. U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte scheduled sentencing for July 19, 2006.

Eighteen other co-defendants who pled guilty have either been scheduled for sentencing between June 2006 and July 2006, or are awaiting sentencing dates.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the investigative work performed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Prince George's County Police Department. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys David I. Salem and Gina L. Simms, who are prosecuting the case.