



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPRINGFIELD, MO., MAN SENTENCED IN LARGE-SCALE MARIJUANA CONSPIRACY

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Bradley J. Schlozman, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Springfield, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for participating in a conspiracy to distribute thousands of pounds of marijuana in Greene and Webster counties.

George Dye, 24, of Springfield, was sentenced before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this morning to 12 years and seven months in federal prison without parole.

On July 26, 2006, **Dye** pleaded guilty to participating in a conspiracy to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana from Oct. 16, 2003, to Feb. 8, 2005, in Greene and Webster counties. **Dye** admitted that he stored marijuana at his residence during the conspiracy, and assisted in the distribution of marijuana to other members of the conspiracy who came to the residence. **Dye** also admitted that he was in possession of a Taurus 9 mm handgun with ammunition, and a Ruger Mark II rifle with a scope during the course of, and in connection to, the conspiracy.

During the course of the conspiracy, **Dye** admitted, the most reasonably foreseeable amount of marijuana distributed by the conspiracy was at least 1,000 kilograms but less than 3,000 kilograms.

Dye is among 11 co-defendants who pleaded guilty to charges contained in a Nov. 2, 2005, superseding indictment.

* **Ryan S. Dill**, 24, of Springfield, was sentenced on Nov. 3, 2006, to 11 years and three months in federal prison without parole. On July 14, 2006, **Dill** pleaded guilty to his role in the marijuana conspiracy. **Dill** admitted that he received large amounts of marijuana to distribute in the Springfield area – on one occasion, **Dill** received 11 kilograms of marijuana for redistribution, which was eventually seized by the Missouri State Highway Patrol. **Dill** also pleaded guilty to participating in a money-laundering conspiracy. **Dill** admitted that he reinvested the cash proceeds from his sale of marijuana into the conspiracy in order to obtain more marijuana. **Dill** agreed to forfeit to the government residential property in Springfield as well as \$22,802 that was placed in escrow following the sale of property in Pleasant Hope, Mo.; both properties were purchased with the proceeds of the marijuana conspiracy.

* **Julio Lopez**, 28, of Tulare, Calif., was sentenced on Aug. 4, 2006, to 10 years in federal prison without parole. On April 19, 2006, **Lopez** pleaded guilty to his role in the marijuana conspiracy. **Lopez** also admitted that he distributed approximately 575 grams of methamphetamine to individuals in southwest Missouri.

Eight co-defendants have pleaded guilty to their role in the marijuana conspiracy. Awaiting sentencing are **Landon C. Roper**, 22, **Benjamin D. Christian**, 29, **Billy J. Berringer**, 27, all of Springfield, **Crystal L. Fox**, 32, **Donna S. Berringer**, 28, and **Michael E. Spear**, 24, all of Marshfield, Mo., **Jeremiah Lucas Louthan**, 27, of West Plains, Mo., and **James M. Allen**, 30, of Pierce City, Mo.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. The case was investigated by IRS – Criminal Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Greene County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Webster County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, and the Springfield, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html