

Federal Inmate Found Guilty of Conspiring to Distribute Marijuana Within the Federal Correctional Institution in Memphis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2012

Memphis, TN - Edward L. Stanton, III, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, announced today that on Friday, August 17, 2012, Mark Evans, age 41, of Waco, Texas, was found guilty of conspiracy to distribute marijuana, in violation of 21 U.S.C. Section 846. The defendant faces up to ten years incarceration.

Mark Evans, aka "Black," the head of a drug conspiracy ring that operated within the confines of the Federal Correctional Institution in Memphis, was found guilty after a four day jury trial. Evans and his co-conspirators operated a network that spanned three states - Tennessee, Louisiana, and Texas. Testimony at trial from Evans' co-defendants and co-conspirators established that between September 2009 and May 2010, Evans received contraband tobacco and marijuana through the prison kitchen, brought in by a corrupt food services employee. Evans or his fellow inmates would then distribute the marijuana to other prisoners for up to \$900 an ounce of marijuana and \$250 an ounce of tobacco. Inmates purchasing the marijuana would send money orders to the wife of Evans' top marijuana wholesaler in Shreveport, Louisiana. The money orders were converted to cash and disbursed to Evans' family members in Texas and also to two post office boxes in Memphis, Tennessee opened up at the behest of the corrupt food services employee. This operation generated at least \$85,000 during the course of the conspiracy, according to testimony from Evans' family and the food services employee, who agreed to plead guilty and testify in return for the possibility of a reduced sentence. In all, this prosecution resulted in the convictions of five inmates - Evans, Vincent West, Tyrone Bryant, David Chambers, and Larry Burse - as well as Debra Thompson, the food services employee.

Since March 2012, the United States Attorney's Office has successfully secured the convictions of thirteen individuals charged with offenses related to introducing and selling marijuana and other contraband into a federal prison or detention facility.

United States Attorney Edward L. Stanton, III said: "The jury's verdict should make it clear that neither this office nor the public will tolerate drug trafficking or corruption within federal prisons. Thanks to this prosecution and the jury's verdict, Evans will be spending even more time in federal prison than he was already slated to serve."

"With the recent prosecution of Mark Evans, we will continue, along with our partners with the United States Attorney's Office and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to work diligently to ferret out, and punish all those responsible for bringing illegal contraband into the penal facility," said D.R. Stephens, Warden of the Federal Correctional Institution, Memphis. "We will continue to exercise a 'zero tolerance' policy with regards to narcotics, and when discovered we will seek justice and ensure that those responsible are held accountable."

This case was a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Matt Price and Keenan Carter.