

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
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Camden, New Jersey 08101

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**Ralph J. Marra, Jr., Acting U.S. Attorney**

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Jamaican Man Sentenced to 49 Months in Federal Prison for Leading  
a Bi-coastal Marijuana Trafficking and Money Laundering Ring

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CAMDEN – A Jamaican man was sentenced to 49 months in federal prison today for his leadership role in a group that ran a bi-coastal marijuana trafficking and money laundering ring that originated in California and expanded into at least six other states, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas also ordered Richard Lawson, 42, who resided in San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term and to cooperate U.S. Immigration and Customs officials to resolve his immigration status.

A two-year multi-jurisdictional investigation resulted in the guilty pleas of Lawson and co-defendants Daniel Adams, Sr., 57, of San Diego, Daniel Adams, II, 25, of San Diego and son of Adams, Sr., and David John, 40, of Swedesboro, N.J. The investigation revealed that Lawson acquired large quantities of marijuana from a Mexican drug cartel operating in Tijuana. Lawson then shipped bulk quantities of marijuana from San Diego to dealers in Camden County, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Memphis, Tallahassee, Louisville and elsewhere.

Lawson, Adams, Sr., and Adams, II, were arrested by Special Agents with IRS Criminal Investigation and DEA on a 14-count Indictment, which was returned under seal on April 22, 2008, at separate locations on April 22, June 24 and April 29, respectively.

Lawson pleaded guilty before Judge Irenas on Nov. 19, 2008, to one count of conspiracy to launder the proceeds of drug trafficking. Lawson also forfeited \$26,000 in cash to the government. Adams, Sr., pleaded guilty to a charge of money laundering conspiracy on Aug. 13, 2008, and was sentenced yesterday, March 18, by Judge Irenas to 37 months in federal prison and three years of supervised release. Adams, Sr., also forfeited \$75,000 in cash to the government. Adams, II, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to structure deposits and withdraws on Nov. 5, 2008, was also sentenced today by Judge Irenas to a 10-month period of confinement, which is split evenly between prison and home confinement.

At his plea hearing, Lawson admitted that beginning in 2004 and continuing until April 2008, he was the leader of a group running a marijuana trafficking and money laundering ring that was responsible for purchasing large quantities of marijuana from Mexican suppliers and then redistributed the marijuana from San Diego to at least six other states, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Florida, Ohio and Tennessee.

Lawson admitted he established sham or fake corporations to provide a legitimate appearance for the drug trafficking activities and the resulting flow of drug proceeds. Lawson opened bank accounts to facilitate the deposit of payments for marijuana sales by those who purchased the drugs. Lawson admitted that he instructed the buyers to make deposits in amounts less than \$10,000 to avoid causing the banks to file currency transaction reports. Furthermore, Lawson admitted he instructed the buyers to make multiple cash deposits at different bank branches in amounts less than \$10,000 to avoid the reporting requirement.

Once the money was deposited in the fraudulent accounts, the money was subsequently removed in California through structured cash withdrawals in amounts of less than \$10,000 and driven to Mexico to pay for the marijuana and to hide the proceeds from the government. Lawson admitted

that between January 2004 and August 2006, approximately \$1.9 million was deposited into accounts under his control.

John pleaded guilty on Dec. 8, 2006, to an Information charging one count each of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana and conspiracy to commit money laundering. He is awaiting sentencing.

In determining the actual sentences, Judge Irenas consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents with IRS Criminal Investigation Division, Newark Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord; the DEA Newark Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer; Investigators with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Warren W. Faulk, the IRS-CID's Los Angeles Field Office, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Catherine Tucker; DEA's Phoenix Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Elizabeth W. Kempshall; and DEA's San Diego Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Ralph W. Partridge, with the investigation leading to the guilty pleas.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason M. Richardson of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorneys:

Lawson - Ed Crisonino, Esq. Haddon Township

Adams - Martin Isenberg, Esq. Gibbsboro

Adams, II - Thomas Young, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender

John - Michael J. Diamonstein, Esq. Philadelphia