



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS OFFICE
NORTHERN DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

CORRUPT FEDERAL OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO SMUGGLING GUNS AND DRUG MONEY
THROUGH THE AIRPORT

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby
(404)581-6016
FAX (404)581-6160

Former Officer and Wife Also Plead Guilty to Marriage Fraud Scheme

ATLANTA, GA - DEVON SAMUELS, 45, and KEISHA JONES, 30, both of Stockbridge, Georgia, pleaded guilty today in federal district court. SAMUELS pleaded guilty to conspiring to launder drug money and attempting to smuggle guns onto an airplane. In a separate case, SAMUELS and JONES pleaded guilty to conspiring to commit marriage fraud.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "Our citizens expect the federal government and its agents to protect the borders, and not use their badges as a personal gateways for getting cash. In this case, a federal customs officer smuggled guns and drug money for people he thought were international narcotics traffickers. At about the same time, he and his wife were running a corrupt marriage business on the side. Such officers can expect to see federal prison."

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: SAMUELS, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer, was charged in connection with three undercover sting operations with smuggling drug money and guns through Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

On November 3, 2010, an undercover officer, posing as a drug money launderer, gave SAMUELS approximately \$25,000 in money represented to be from the sale of drugs. With the assistance of others, and by unlawfully using his badge to bypass security and avoid screening, SAMUELS smuggled the money through Atlanta's airport to Jamaica. Once in Jamaica, SAMUELS delivered the money to a Jamaican undercover police officer who was posing as an international drug trafficker.

On November 19, 2010, SAMUELS accepted over \$50,000 in purported drug money from another undercover officer. SAMUELS then traveled from Atlanta to Jamaica, where SAMUELS delivered the money to Jamaican undercover police officers. While in Atlanta's airport, SAMUELS again unlawfully used his badge to bypass security and avoid being screened.

Finally, on November 30, 2010, SAMUELS accepted five firearms and approximately \$20,000 in alleged drug money from an undercover police

officer. SAMUELS smuggled the firearms and money into the airport by using his badge to bypass security. Once inside the airport, SAMUELS gave the firearms and money to a second undercover officer who had told SAMUELS that she was going to transport the firearms and money to Arizona for a meeting with members of a Mexican drug cartel.

In the marriage fraud scheme, beginning in November 2009, SAMUELS used his knowledge of immigration policies to assist CARLTON FERGUSON, 35, and DAHLIA McLAREN, 30, both of Decatur, Georgia, to deceive U.S. immigration authorities into believing that FERGUSON and McLAREN's sham marriage was genuine. SAMUELS and JONES (his wife) were also paid to falsely complete the immigration paperwork necessary for MCLAREN to obtain United States citizenship through her sham marriage to FERGUSON. Both FERGUSON and McLAREN have pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges and await sentencing.

SAMUELS today pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to launder money, for which he could receive a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$500,000. He has also pleaded guilty to one count of attempting carrying weapon on to an aircraft, for which SAMUELS could receive a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Finally, SAMUELS and JONES have each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to commit marriage fraud, for which they could receive a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

The sentencings of SAMUELS and JONES are scheduled for June 2, 2011, at 10:30 a.m., before United States District Judge Timothy C. Batten, Sr.

The investigation and prosecution of this case was a coordinated effort through the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force which is comprised of Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); U.S. Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE), Office of Professional Responsibility and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI); U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Inspector General (OIG); Anti-Corruption Branch, Jamaican Constabulary Force; DeKalb County Police Department; U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Field Operations; Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation; and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (I.N.L.) U. S. State Department; and the United States Marshal Service, with assistance from Delta Air Lines Corporate Security.

Assistant United States Attorneys Jeffrey W. Davis, Cassandra Schansman, and Skye Davis are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is
www.justice.gov/usao/gan.

Dustin Wright

Assistant to the Special Agent in Charge (ATSAC) Office of Field Support -
Region 2 U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General
Office of Investigations
202-632-0361 Desk
202-380-6287 Cell