

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Middle District of Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2017

Former U.S. Postal Service Employee Sentenced to 72 Months in Prison for Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering

HARRISBURG, PA – The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania announced today that Ramona Long, age 57, a former U.S. Postal Service employee in Northern California, was sentenced on September 28, 2017, by United States District Court Judge Yvette Kane to 72 months' imprisonment. Long previously entered pleas of guilty before Judge Kane to conspiring to manufacture and distribute 100 kilograms of marijuana and conspiracy to launder drug proceeds. Heath engaged in a conspiracy that trafficked hundreds of pounds of marijuana between Northern California, Florida and York County, Pennsylvania.

According to United States Attorney Bruce D. Brandler, Long and her co-defendants, including her son Tyler Long, age 33, son-in-law Christopher Mark Heath, age 39, and Ryan Jay Falsone, age 28, participated in a conspiracy that began in approximately September 2014, and continued to January 7, 2016. During this time, Heath was a deputy sheriff in Yuba County, California, assigned as a narcotics investigator. Long and her co-defendants grew marijuana on Long's 20 acre property in Oroville, CA, and shipped it through the United States Postal Service to several locations, including post office boxes in York and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. When law enforcement officers searched Ramona Long's California property, they discovered a shop devoted exclusively to the harvesting and processing of marijuana. Inside the shop there was a trimmer, drying racks, 74 raised planter beds and grow lights. In Long's residence, officers seized five firearms, various ammunition and multiple plastic bins containing marijuana that Long tried to conceal from them as they entered the home.

In December 2015, Ramona Long assisted her co-conspirators with packaging marijuana they had grown and packed it to sell on the East Coast. Heath, Falsone and Tyler Long traveled from California to York County in two vehicles, transporting 89.5 kilograms of this marijuana worth just under half a million dollars. Heath's truck contained the entire quantity of marijuana as well as a loaded Glock firearm and his deputy sheriff's badge. When Heath, Falsone and Tyler Long arrived to

deliver the marijuana in York County, they were arrested by the York County Drug Task Force and Penn Township Police Department.

This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, the York County Drug Task Force, Penn Township Police Department, the Butte County Sheriff's Department (California), the United States Postal Inspection Service, and the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Meredith A. Taylor and Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph J. Terz are prosecuting the case.

The maximum penalty for conspiracy to manufacture, distribute, and possess with intent to manufacture and distribute 100 kilograms and more of marijuana is 40 years' imprisonment and carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years' imprisonment. The maximum penalty for conspiracy to commit money laundering is 20 years' imprisonment.

Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the Judge is also required to consider and weigh a number of factors, including the nature, circumstances and seriousness of the offense; the history and characteristics of the defendant; and the need to punish the defendant, protect the public and provide for the defendant's educational, vocational and medical needs. For these reasons, the statutory maximum penalty for the offense is not an accurate indicate of the potential sentence for a specific defendant.

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