



# Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 01, 2009  
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## **PATASKALA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY AND TAX CRIME**

COLUMBUS – Joseph Marasco, 42, of Pataskala, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of willfully filing a fraudulent 2002 federal income tax return with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and to one count of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute over 100 kilograms of marijuana. Marasco faces a minimum of five years in prison and a maximum of 40 years in prison as well as a fine of up to \$2 million.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Jose A. Gonzalez, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation, announced the plea entered before Senior United States District Judge John D. Holschuh. Marasco remains on bond pending his sentencing, which has not been set.

According to public court documents and testimony, beginning in early 1997 and continuing for a period of seven or eight years, Marasco located sources of marijuana that he and a co-conspirator sold to friends and associates. Typically the marijuana would be brought into Central Ohio from out of state. One supplier was from Canada. Marasco did not report the profits from the sale of marijuana on his federal income tax returns, nor did he pay any federal income taxes on these profits. The IRS estimated that for the three consecutive years of 2001 through 2003, Marasco failed to pay approximately \$84,000.00 in federal income taxes.

A federal grand jury indicted Marasco along with Robert M. Fusner, 33, of Grove City, on July 16, 2008. Fusner pleaded guilty on February 26, 2009 to one count of willfully filing a fraudulent 2001 federal income tax return with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and to one count of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute over 100 kilograms of marijuana.

Lockhart commended the investigation by IRS agents and Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan Brown, who prosecuted the case.

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