

PRESS RELEASE

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THREE DEFENDANTS PLEAD GUILTY IN ST. CROIX TRIBAL DRUG INVESTIGATION

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that three defendants pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Madison to conspiring to distribute crack cocaine on St. Croix tribal lands. Those defendants are: (1) George Rainey, 29, Rice Lake, Wis.; (2) Diana Martin, 33, Webster, Wis.; and (3) Andrew Sonnenberg, 26, Cumberland, Wis. Each defendant faces a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in federal prison, and a maximum penalty of life in federal prison, without parole. Visiting Judge James Moody, from the Northern District of Indiana, accepted the guilty pleas and will schedule sentencing dates in the near future.

The government's proof at the guilty plea hearings established that each of these defendants worked with Jean Sonnenberg, and others, to obtain and distribute crack cocaine on St. Croix tribal lands from at least January 2001 through September 2008. Each of the defendants, at various times, traveled with Jean Sonnenberg, and others, to obtain crack cocaine from sources in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. The drugs were

then sold to customers on tribal lands in northwestern Wisconsin.

During the first several months of 2008, an individual working with law enforcement officers purchased crack cocaine from Andrew Sonnenberg and Diana Martin on several occasions. Each of these purchases was recorded by law enforcement officers.

George Rainey's involvement began in approximately 1998 and ended with his conviction of drug offenses in Barron County in 2006. During this time period, he and his girlfriend - Margrette Cobb - were in the business of selling crack cocaine for the Sonnenberg drug organization.

The remaining five defendants in this case - Margrette Cobb, Bruce Sonnenberg, Amanda Sonnenberg, Jean Sonnenberg, and Bruce Rainey - are scheduled to enter guilty pleas on March 30 and March 31, 2009.

United States Attorney Peterson stated that today's guilty pleas resulted from a long-term investigation being conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation-Narcotics Bureau; Federal Bureau of Investigation; St. Croix Tribal Police Department; Rice Lake Police Department; Barron County Sheriff's Department; Burnett County Sheriff's Department; Polk County Sheriff's Department; Native American Drug & Gang Initiative; and Wisconsin State Patrol. Peterson stated that the investigation is continuing and additional indictments and arrests are expected.

The prosecution of the cases is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney John W. Vaudreuil.

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