

Illegal Drugs and Trafficking



Postal Inspectors arrested 1,662 suspects in FY 2001 for drug trafficking and money laundering via the U.S. Mail.

The Postal Inspection Service interdicts mailings of illegal drugs and drug proceeds to protect postal employees from the violence often related to drug trafficking and to preserve the integrity of the U.S. Mail. Working in concert with other law enforcement agencies, Postal Inspectors arrested 1,662 individuals this fiscal year for drug trafficking and money laundering via the U.S. Mail. Seizures from the mail included more than 8,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and more than 288,000 units of steroids. Postal Inspection Service investigations also resulted in the seizure of more than \$3.5 million in cash and monetary instruments, 20 vehicles and 64 firearms.

The following paragraphs are examples of Postal Inspection Service investigations of illegal drug trafficking via the mail in FY 2001.

◆ Postal Inspectors arrested a major figure in a heroin conspiracy ring that mailed narcotics from the San Francisco Bay area to Iowa City, IA. The defendant, who is a convicted felon, was found guilty in an Iowa federal court and sentenced on February 2, 2001, to 12 years and five months in prison.

◆ U.S. Customs Service agents stopped a man at Miami International Airport as he returned from Cali, Colombia, after an investigation with Postal Inspectors disclosed he had shipped a suspect Express Mail parcel from Colombia to New Haven, CT. Postal Inspectors who intercepted the parcel obtained a search warrant and found it contained nearly two pounds of cocaine. Inspectors and agents arrest-

ed the man and executed another search warrant on his residence, where they seized a loaded handgun. On January 3, 2001, he was indicted on charges of importing cocaine, attempting to possess cocaine with the intent to distribute it and illegally possessing a firearm. Each drug charge carried a mandatory minimum five-year prison sentence and the firearms charge carried a 10-year sentence.

◆ Postal Inspectors dismantled a methamphetamine ring operating in the South Jersey area over a one-year period, shipping and receiving approximately 20 pounds of the drug. Inspectors in San Diego, CA, arrested the mailer, who was sentenced in federal district court in New Jersey to 100 months' incarceration. Two other defendants in South Jersey were each sentenced to 60 months' incarceration, and another two suspects are awaiting sentencing.

◆ Postal Inspectors arrested two men in Morristown, TN, who accepted an Express Mail package containing approximately 14 pounds of marijuana. A joint investigation by Postal Inspectors, agents from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and Morristown and Knoxville police identified one man as the leader of a cocaine and marijuana conspiracy responsible for mailing at least eight kilograms of cocaine and as much as 500 kilograms of marijuana. At its height, the group distributed about 80 pounds of marijuana a week. Through FedEx shipping records, Inspectors identified eight addresses the ring used at commercial mail receiving agencies. They shipped the packages via FedEx, UPS and the Postal Service, although



Postal Inspection Service personnel conduct interdictions to identify illegal narcotics in mailings at postal processing sites in major source cities and other locations.

they shipped all of the cocaine via Express Mail. Following a two-week trial, the two men were convicted on all counts. Five convictions have now been obtained in the case. On June 29, 2001, one man was sentenced to three years and four months in prison. Two others who were awaiting sentencing escaped from a county jail on July 12, 2001, and are fugitives.

◆ A Boston man was sentenced on July 19, 2001, to two years in prison as the result of a joint investigation by Postal Inspectors, DEA agents, Massachusetts State Police and agents from the Food and Drug Administration. The man pled guilty to distributing controlled substances via the Internet. He obtained the drugs from a physician in Tijuana, Mexico, and a source in Madrid, Spain.

◆ A Dallas, TX, man pled guilty on August 8, 2001, to possessing more than 100 grams of heroin. Postal Inspectors arrested him on May 29, 2001, when he accepted an Express

Mail parcel containing the drugs and signed the receipt with a fictitious name. He initially denied knowledge of the heroin, which was concealed in jeans and boots.

Postal Inspectors investigate the dealing and selling of narcotics by postal employees while on postal property or on duty. Information on the possession or personal use of illegal drugs by postal employees is



referred through postal management to the Employee Assistance Program for attention. In FY 2001, Postal Inspectors arrested 43 postal employees suspected of possessing or using illegal drugs on duty; 32 employees were removed from the Postal Service.

Following are examples of Postal Inspection Service investigations of narcotics-related offenses by postal employees during FY 2001.

◆ Postal Inspectors and officers from the Detroit Police Department's Narcotics Unit arrested a mail handler at a bulk mail center on November 6, 2000, for possessing and delivering marijuana. The employee was the sub-

ject of a six-month investigation into the sale of controlled substances to postal employees while on duty and on postal property. He has since accepted an agreement to resign from the Postal Service and not seek re-employment, perform 150 hours of community service and submit to drug testing and substance abuse treatment.

◆ A member of the Black Disciples street gang was arrested on June 1, 2001, for his role in selling crack cocaine to an undercover Postal Inspector in Chicago, IL. He had supplied the drugs to a letter carrier who had previously been arrested on drug charges. Both men were indicted on May 31 on federal charges for distributing a controlled substance and conspiracy to distribute. The gang member has since been convicted on those charges and was sentenced to more than 17 years in prison and five years' supervised release. The letter carrier pled guilty and was sentenced to six years in prison. He was also ordered to pay \$2,660 in restitution to the U.S. Postal Service.

◆ A mail handler in Kalamazoo, MI, was sentenced on June 18, 2001, to five months' imprisonment, three years' supervised release and payment of court costs and fines totaling \$5,100 for possession with intent to distribute marijuana. Postal Inspectors arrested the employee and his associate, who was a juvenile probation officer for the state of Michigan. Inspectors and Kalamazoo Valley police identified the two as large-scale manufacturers and distributors of domestic marijuana. The mail handler is on indefinite suspension pending removal.

◆ Postal Inspectors and Cambridge, MA, police arrested a postal custodian on August 2, 2001, for selling marijuana to an undercover Cambridge police detective. At the time of his arrest, he was working at a local post office.