



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Melinda Haag
Northern District of California

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CONTACT: JACK GILLUND
(415) 436-

Jack.Gillund

**SENIOR CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL AND CONCORD PRIVATE
INVESTIGATOR INDICTED**

CNET Commander Norman Wielsch and PI Christopher Butler Alleged to Have Engaged in a Spectrum of Corrupt Activities, Including Stealing Methamphetamine and Marijuana from Evidence and Selling It For Profit, Protection of a Prostitution Establishment, and Armed Robberies of Prostitutes

SAN FRANCISCO - A federal grand jury in San Francisco indicted Norman Wielsch of Antioch, Calif., and Christopher Butler of Concord, Calif., on Aug. 8, 2011, for federal narcotics offenses, civil rights violations, and extortion, United States Attorney Melinda Haag announced.

According to the indictment, Wielsch, 50, and Butler, 50, are alleged to have participated together in criminal activities made possible by Wielsch's position as the commander of the Contra Costa County Narcotics Enforcement Team (CNET). The indictment alleges the following abuses of Wielsch's position, in which Butler, a private investigator based in Concord, participated and assisted:

- Wielsch, aided and abetted by Butler, stole from county evidence facilities methamphetamine and marijuana that had been seized in CNET operations. Wielsch and Butler sold some of the stolen narcotics and intended to sell the remainder. The quantity of methamphetamine sold by Wielsch and Butler was sufficiently large to trigger a mandatory minimum term of 10 years imprisonment, if proven at trial.
- Wielsch and Butler participated together in a phony “sting” operation in which they falsely detained a person under the guise of a legitimate law enforcement operation, conducted warrantless searches, and kept narcotics that were taken from the person during the “sting.”
- Butler opened a massage parlor in Pleasant Hill, Calif., in which prostitution activities took place. He required the women working in the parlor to make weekly payments, which he shared with Wielsch, in exchange for Wielsch’s agreement to provide protection to the women from law enforcement action.
- Wielsch and Butler together conducted “stings” directed at prostitutes. Wielsch and Butler identified individuals they believed to be prostitutes through online advertisements and arranged meetings with them, typically in hotels. Wielsch and Butler then staged what purported to be legitimate sting operations, but instead of seizing evidence and citing the prostitutes, they unlawfully took the prostitutes’ money and property for themselves.

“This indictment alleges a pattern of lawlessness that not only violated the trust of the people of Contra Costa County, but also brings dishonor to all the fine men and women in law enforcement who work hard, do the right thing, and risk their lives every day protecting our communities,” U.S. Attorney Haag said. In May 2011, the Contra Costa County District Attorney asked the U.S. Attorney’s Office to lead the investigation. “The District Attorney’s Office led the initial investigation and did a thorough and professional job,” U.S. Attorney Haag said. “When the extent of the alleged misconduct became apparent, however, District Attorney Mark Peterson asked our office and the FBI to take the lead. We took that responsibility without hesitation.”

Wielsch and Butler were arrested this morning by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who have been investigating the case since May 2011.

The defendants’ initial appearance took place this morning in federal court in San Francisco; they are currently being held without bail pending detention hearings. Butler’s detention hearing is scheduled for Aug. 18, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. before Magistrate Judge Nathanael Cousins in San Francisco. Wielsch’s detention hearing is scheduled for Aug. 22, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. before Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler in Oakland, Calif.

The maximum statutory penalties for each count are as follows, although any sentence imposed by the court following conviction would take into consideration the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553:

Count 1 – Narcotics Conspiracy, 21 U.S.C. § 846 (Wielsch and Butler)

Life imprisonment (10 year mandatory minimum)
Five years supervised release
\$10,000,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Count 2 – Methamphetamine Distribution, 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) (Wielsch and Butler)

Life imprisonment (10 year mandatory minimum)
Five years supervised release
\$10,000,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Count 3 – Methamphetamine Distribution, 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) (Butler)

Life imprisonment (10 year mandatory minimum)
Five years supervised release
\$10,000,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Counts 4 through 9 – Marijuana Distribution, 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) (Butler)

Five years imprisonment (10 year mandatory minimum)
Three years supervised release
\$10,000,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Counts 10 through 13 – Theft From Programs Receiving Federal Funds, 18 U.S.C. § 666(a)(1) (Wielsch)

10 years imprisonment
Three years supervised release
\$250,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Count 14 & 16 – Civil Rights Conspiracy, 18 U.S.C. § 241 (Wielsch and Butler)

Life imprisonment
Five years supervised release
\$250,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Count 15 & 17 – Extortion, 18 U.S.C. § 1951 (Wielsch and Butler)

20 years imprisonment
Five years supervised release

\$250,000 fine
\$100 special assessment

Hartley M.K. West and John Hemann are the Assistant U.S. Attorneys who are prosecuting the case with the assistance of Alycee Lane, Rania Ghawi, and Cristhian Escobar. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Contra Costa District Attorney's Office.

Please note, an indictment contains only allegations against an individual and, as with all defendants, Mr. Wielsch and Mr. Butler must be presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Further Information:

Case #: CR-11-0529-SBA

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Jack Gillund at (415) 436-6599 or by e-mail at Jack.Gillund@usdoj.gov.

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