



Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

826 Fourth Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Date: 08-07-2013

From: Lt. Steve Knight
(707) 268-3630

Subject: Marijuana Investigation

Case: DTF HC13-089

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 08-06-2013, approximately 7:30 a.m. Humboldt County Drug Task Force Agents, assisted by the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and Humboldt County District Attorney's Office, served a Humboldt County Superior Court Search Warrant at a residence in the 1300 block of Silverado Drive, McKinleyville. The warrant was in regards to an ongoing criminal investigation involving the cultivation, transportation and sales of marijuana. When the search warrant was served, agents contacted the occupants of the residence who were home at the time; they were Joseph Michael Rodriguez, 38 years old, and Chelsea Sarah Briggs, 29 years old. Agents searched the residence and located 311 growing marijuana plants ranging in height from 6" to 3' tall growing in the residence, along with 26 pounds of drying marijuana, packaging materials, three handguns, one shotgun, two rifles, 1500 rounds of ammunition, approximately \$6,000.00 in cash and four grams of hash. Agents arrested Rodriguez and Briggs for cultivation of marijuana, possession of marijuana for sale, maintaining a place for distribution of a controlled substance, armed in the commission of a felony and conspiracy to commit a crime. They were both transported and booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility where their bail was set at \$100,000.00 each.

Agents also located information regarding another address Rodriguez was associated with in the 2100 block of Thiel Lane, McKinleyville. A Humboldt County Superior Court Search

Warrant was obtained for that address. While agents were watching that address waiting for the search warrant to be signed by a Humboldt County Judge, they witnessed a male drive away from the residence in a White Subaru. A Humboldt County Deputy Sheriff stopped and spoke with the male driver of that vehicle in the Central Avenue Shopping Center parking lot. The driver of that vehicle was identified as Gino Valerio, 43 years old. While contacting Valerio the deputy located five ounces of marijuana bud in the vehicle.

On 08-06-2013, at 11:55 a.m., a Humboldt County Superior Court Judge signed a search warrant for the residence on Thiel lane, McKinleyville. When Agents and Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Deputies served the search warrant they located three bedrooms in the home that were being used to cultivated marijuana. The officers located and seized 198 growing marijuana plants ranging in size from 1' to 4' tall, approximately ½ pound of processed marijuana, approximately \$2,000.00 in cash, packaging materials and a scale. Valerio was arrested for cultivation of marijuana, possession for sale of marijuana, transportation of marijuana and maintaining a place for the distribution of a controlled substance. He was transported and booked into the Humboldt County Correctional Facility where his bail was set at \$100,000.00.

Due to possible electrical fire hazards at both residences the Humboldt County Building and Planning Department and Pacific Gas and Electric were notified. The Building and Planning Department responded and told the agents there was a fire and electrical hazard. Electrical service to both residences was shut off.

Anyone with information regarding these cases or other drug related criminal activity is encouraged to call the Humboldt County Drug Task Force at 707-444-8095. Anonymous tips information are accepted.

Mike Downey
Sheriff



