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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

December 10, 2014

Appeals Exhausted for Aston Earl McCrea, AKA 'Kojak'

On October 5, 2011, investigators with the Bedford County Sheriff's Office, Vice Unit, obtained a State Search Warrant for the residence of Aston Earl McCrea, located at 3764 Spradlin Road, Goodview, Virginia. The search warrant was obtained as a result information provided by Roanoke City Police Department, Vice Unit, and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

Bedford County Investigators were informed that a UPS package was interdicted in Roanoke City containing approximately 50 pounds of marijuana and that a controlled delivery of the package would be delivered to a subject that resided at 3764 Spradlin Road, which is located in the Goodview area of Bedford County. Investigators then conducted a controlled delivery of the package to Mr. McCrea at his residence located in Bedford County. Bedford County Sheriff's Office led a search warrant at McCrea's home assisted by Department of Homeland Security Special Agents, the Roanoke City Police Department, and the Virginia State Police. A search of the residence located the marijuana shipment along with a firearm and currency.

The joint investigation revealed that McCrea was party to an interstate conspiracy to traffic large amounts of marijuana into Virginia where he arranged for distribution of the drugs in the Roanoke Valley and surrounding area. McCrea admitted to investigators to receiving large shipments of marijuana for several months and profiting approximately \$77,000.00 from illegal marijuana sales. McCrea was charged with conspiracy to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, conspiracy to commit money laundering, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and possession of a firearm in the furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

The case was tried at the United States District Court in Roanoke, Virginia by the United States Attorney's Office. After a two-day trial, the jury convicted McCrea of the charges. On September 7, 2012, the District Court sentence McCrea to 180 months of incarceration. After McCrea's sentencing, the District Court ordered the seizure and forfeiture of McCrea's residence at 3764 Spradlin Road, Goodview, Virginia

The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit recently affirmed the forfeiture of McCrea's property, which includes a single-family residence with approximately 49.54 acres of land. Homeland Security Investigations plans to secure the property this week.

This release was held until this date as the result of appeals on the sentence handed down and the seizure of the assets of the subject.