

NEWS RELEASE



Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office
71 Monument Park
Freehold, New Jersey 07728
732/ 431-7160
Luis A. Valentin, Prosecutor

FREEHOLD MAN RECEIVES 12 YEAR PRISON TERM FOR OPERATING A MARIJUANA PRODUCTION FACILITY

On April 12, 2010, Michael Papazoglou, 30, of Freehold Township, N.J., was sentenced to a 12 year State Prison term for the first degree crime of Maintaining or Operating a Controlled Dangerous Substance Production Facility. The charge stems from the November 18, 2008, arrest of Papazoglou and four others at Papazoglou's rented Freehold residence. As part of his sentence, Papazoglou must serve six years before he will become eligible for release on parole. Papazoglou pled guilty to the charge on December 7, 2009, before Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Ronald Lee Reisner, who also imposed sentence.

On December 7, 2009, Jeremy Wheeler, 30, of Tufonboro, N.H., and Jamil Farmer, 26, of New York City, N.Y., also appeared before Judge Reisner and entered guilty pleas to second degree Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance With Intent to Distribute. On February 19, 2009, Wheeler was sentenced to a six year State Prison term. On January 29, 2009, Farmer was sentenced to a five year State Prison term. Wheeler and Farmer each must serve a period of two years before becoming eligible for release on parole. The guilty pleas were entered into pursuant to negotiated plea agreements.

On November 18, 2008, the Freehold Township Police Department received a report of a suspicious U-Haul truck at what was later determined to be Papazoglou's residence. A lawful search of the U-Haul truck resulted in the discovery of 99 marijuana plants together with equipment used to facilitate growing the plants, including an atmospheric controller and a reflector lamp. A lawful search of the residence yielded an additional 63 marijuana plants at varying stages of growth, loose marijuana vegetation, additional growing lamps, a carbon dioxide generator, and other items commonly used in the cultivation, growing and processing of marijuana. Additional quantities of processed marijuana were found in a motor vehicle belonging to Farmer.

The investigation revealed that Papazoglou had been growing the marijuana plants in the basement of the residence, that a decision had been made to move the marijuana plants elsewhere, and that Wheeler and Farmer were responsible for transporting the marijuana plants to the new location. On the day of the arrests, Wheeler rented the U-Haul truck and traveled to Freehold where he met with Farmer, Papazoglou and another, unidentified man. The four men then loaded the marijuana plants and growing equipment into the U-Haul truck so that the production operation could be resumed at a different location.

Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin stated, "The Freehold Township Police Department is to be commended for their quick response and diligence in responding to a seemingly routine call. As a result of thorough police work, a large quantity of marijuana was seized and an operation facility was shut down, insuring that these drugs never reached our community."

During the entry of their guilty pleas, Papazoglou, Wheeler and Farmer, as required by law within the State of New Jersey, provided the Court with a factual basis demonstrating their guilt of the charges they were pleading guilty to. Based upon the factual bases provided by Papazoglou, Wheeler and Farmer during the entry of their guilty pleas, related charges against Stephanie Federico, 19, of Hoboken, N.J., and Alysson Woolley, 25, of Long Branch, N.J., which were contained in the same indictment were dismissed.

The case was assigned to Assistant Monmouth County Prosecutor Tara Wilson. Papazoglou was represented by David P. Donnelly, Esquire, of Red Bank, N.J. Wheeler was represented by Lisa Maglone, Esquire, of Freehold, N.J. Farmer was represented by Maria D. Noto, Esquire, of Matawan, N.J. Federico was represented by Mark Musella, Esquire, of Hasbrouck Heights, N.J. Woolley was represented by Steven E. Nelson, Esquire, of Neptune, N.J.

Released: April 12, 2010