

## **BSA Information Helps Jury Convict Cocaine Trafficker**

Prosecutors used information directly derived from BSA records to help convict a repeat drug trafficker in Federal court. The wealth accumulated by the defendant through illicit drug sales became evident by the filing of numerous CTRs by casinos, a Form 8300 filed in conjunction with the purchase of a luxury automobile, and SARs filed by casinos highlighting an attempt to buy another luxury item through structured transactions.

In 2008, a Federal jury returned a verdict of guilty against the defendant on conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute five kilograms or more of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine as well as other trafficking offenses. The evidence presented at trial established a conspiracy to buy and sell kilogram quantities of cocaine. Specific evidence included court-authorized intercepted telephone conversations discussing the delivery of multi-kilogram quantities of cocaine, as well as evidence of unexplained wealth inconsistent with the defendant's source of income and admissions to purchasing cocaine.

Both the United States attorney and officials from the State involved in the case noted that this prosecution stemmed from an ongoing Federal, State and local law enforcement effort to quell violence fueled by the drug trade in that State. To date, 27 individuals have been charged with Federal crimes as a result of this joint investigative effort. Several additional individuals have been prosecuted and the effort has removed more than two dozen illegal firearms from the streets.

During searches conducted at the time of the arrests, including searches of rented units at several self-storage locations, law enforcement seized approximately five kilograms of cocaine, more than 30 pounds of marijuana, seven firearms, approximately \$60,000 in United States currency, 10 vehicles, and large-scale drug packaging materials from several locations.

An analyst working the case reported that casino CTRs and SARs played a significant part in the case, especially in supporting a guilty verdict at trial. The casino records indicated that the defendant gambled over \$1.8 million in a 7-year period and one SAR filing described his attempt to purchase other luxury items valued at over \$45,000 by violating structuring laws. At the trial in Federal court, the prosecution team successfully used this financial information from the casinos to confront him about his wealth and gambling activities when he testified that he was not a drug dealer.

Prosecutors were able to use information from 16 casino CTRs to show that the defendant spent tens of thousands of dollars for "buying-in" at various casinos. Two SARs were also filed documenting repeated attempts to buy luxury items. In addition, an automobile dealer filed a Form 8300 regarding the purchase of a luxury vehicle, and a local bank filed two SARs referencing apparent structuring of cash withdrawals.

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