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SEARCH

[HOME](#)[ABOUT](#)[NEWS](#)[U.S. ATTORNEY](#)[PRIORITIES](#)[PROGRAMS](#)[EMPLOYMENT](#)[CONTACT US](#)

[U.S. Attorneys](#) » [District of Maryland](#) » [News](#)

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Baltimore Defense Attorney Facing Federal Indictment For Racketeering, Drug, And Money Laundering Conspiracies

Indictment Alleges that the Attorney Conspired to Obstruct Justice, Launder Drug Proceeds, and Distribute Drugs

Baltimore, Maryland – A federal grand jury has indicted Kenneth Wendell Ravenell, age 60, of Monkton, Maryland, on federal charges of racketeering conspiracy, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and narcotics conspiracy. The indictment was returned late on September 18, 2019.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Special Agent in Charge Kelly R. Jackson of the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation, Washington, D.C. Field Office; and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Don A. Hibbert of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Baltimore District Office.

Law enforcement will have no comment beyond this press release at this time.

According to the indictment, Ravenell violated the legitimate and lawful purpose of the law firm where he worked in order to enrich himself and Individual 1 by receiving payments from a drug trafficker client and his associates in exchange for instructing the client and his associates how to evade law enforcement and continue their drug trafficking, laundering drug proceeds, and obstructing justice to protect the client and his associates.

Further, the indictment alleges that Ravenell knowingly protected and assisted co-conspirators in their drug trafficking by coaching co-conspirators about law enforcement techniques so that they could evade these techniques when they trafficked in narcotics. Ravenell allegedly used the law firm's bank accounts

to launder hundreds of thousands of dollars and protect the drug trafficking organization. Ravenell allegedly used the law firm's bank accounts to receive drug payments and make payments to attorneys retained to represent other members of the conspiracy, concealing and misrepresenting the source of the funds to those attorneys. Ravenell allegedly created and caused the creation of false records, including a client file in the name of a person that the law firm did not represent, in order to conceal the source of the funds used to pay other lawyers for their representations of members of the conspiracy. According to the indictment, Ravenell misrepresented to employees of the law firm the purpose of payments he directed them to make for or on behalf of members of the conspiracy. Ravenell also allegedly received substantial cash payments derived from drug sales as compensation for laundering money and for protection he provided to his co-conspirators.

In addition, the indictment alleges that Ravenell and a co-conspirator obtained information about arrested co-conspirators, including whether or not they were cooperating and the status of their cases, and provided such information to other members of the conspiracy so that they could protect ongoing drug operations. The indictment alleges that Ravenell obtained access to incarcerated co-conspirators, whom he did not represent, so that Ravenell could attempt to improperly influence their testimony, attempt to cause them to execute false affidavits and witness statements which he knew to be false, and attempt to cause witnesses to withhold testimony from official proceedings against his client.

Finally, the indictment alleges that Ravenell participated in a conspiracy to distribute 1,000 kilograms or more of marijuana.

If convicted, Ravenell faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison for the racketeering conspiracy; a maximum of 20 years in prison for the money laundering conspiracy; and a maximum of life in prison for the narcotics conspiracy. The case will be handled by U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady, who has been assigned to preside over this case in the District of Maryland.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur commended the IRS-CI, the DEA, the Maryland Transportation Authority Police Department, the Phoenix (Arizona) Police Department, and the Arizona Financial Crimes Task Force for their work in the investigation and thanked the prosecutors who are handling the case.

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Component(s):
USAO - Maryland

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