

LAWYER IS SENTENCED TO 21 MONTHS IN JAIL - FARMINGTON HILLS MAN HAD LINK TO DRUG RING

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A well-known Farmington Hills lawyer was sentenced to 21 months in prison Thursday, the latest casualty in a busted drug ring that transported large quantities of cocaine and marijuana between Los Angeles and Detroit.

"This case shows how drugs, drug money and greed can corrupt people from all walks of life," Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Judge said about the case, which already has wrecked the careers and netted prison sentences for lawyers, a bank vice president and a national sports agent.

Thursday, it was Saunders Dorsey's turn to be sentenced.

Dorsey, 49, pleaded guilty in June to criminal contempt after allegedly helping convicted drug trafficker John Bryant use drug money to buy a home in Oakland County's Springfield Township in 1997. Prosecutors said Dorsey set up a fictitious bank account with the help of Comerica branch manager **Dean** Johnson to conceal the transaction.

In 1999, federal agents raided Bryant's home and tried to seize the property. Dorsey and his assistant, suspended lawyer John Catchings, 41, of Pontiac filed fraudulent court papers to try to thwart the government, prosecutors said.

"This whole thing has been a nightmare," Catchings said Thursday.

Catchings, who pleaded guilty to one count of criminal contempt, admitted forging a lawyer's signature on court documents but said he had been misled. He didn't elaborate.

Chief U.S. District Judge Lawrence Zatkoff sentenced Catchings to 10 months in prison and fined him \$2,500.

Even though Dorsey had pleaded guilty to criminal contempt, Dorsey told Zatkoff the incident resulted from negligence rather than deceit.

One of Dorsey's former associates, Detroit attorney Mack Faison, urged Zatkoff to go easy on Dorsey. Faison said the wheelchair-using Dorsey showed courage after being paralyzed in a fall from the Buhl Building. Dorsey fell from an upper-floor window after an angry client firebombed and shotgunned the Bell & Hudson law firm in 1982.

Zatkoff sentenced Dorsey to 21 months and fined him \$10,000. Dorsey automatically forfeits his law license. The other charges against Dorsey, including money laundering, were dismissed.

Dorsey and Catchings are among 24 people who were indicted after a 3-year probe by Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigations, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Treasury inspector general.

The government said Bryant and **Dean Parker** of Southfield ran a ring that shipped over 500 kilograms of cocaine in cars equipped with hidden compartments in 1997-98.

Sixteen people have been sentenced to prison in the case.

Bryant, 31, is serving a 19 1/2-year sentence for drug trafficking. Johnson, 45, the bank vice president, is serving four years for money laundering.

Former national sports agent William (Tank) Black, 45, is serving 6 3/4 years for money laundering. A lawyer for Black's sports management firm, James Franklin, 34, of Columbia, S.C., is serving 32 months for money laundering.

Bryant's partner, **Dean Parker**, fled and was featured three times on the television show "America's Most Wanted." **Parker** shot himself to death when police cornered him in St. Louis County, Mo., in September 2001.

Claude Mask, 72, formerly of Detroit, and James Haywood, 51, formerly of River Rouge, have never been found and may be dead, authorities said.

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