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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHRISTIAN A. REICHERT, MARION, SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR CANNABIS CONSPIRACY AND CANNABIS TRAFFICKING

Michael C. Carr, State's Attorney for Jackson County, Illinois, announced today that Christian A. Reichert, 26, of Marion, Illinois, was sentenced on Tuesday, October 23, 2018, to serve 23 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Deliver more than 5,000 grams of Cannabis and Trafficking in more than 5,000 grams of Cannabis. A Jackson County Jury returned guilty verdicts on both charges after deliberating for less than one hour at the end of a five-day jury trial on July 28, 2018.

Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Cannabis involving more than 5,000 grams is a Class 1 felony. Cannabis Trafficking in more than 2,000 grams from another state to Illinois is a Class X felony. Reichert was sentenced to serve 15 years for the conspiracy and a concurrent term of 23 years for trafficking. Both cases involved Reichert's participation in a plan to collect money owed to members of the conspiracy and trafficking organization which involved shootings in Carbondale on Friday, July 29, 2016, on East Oak Street and Sunday July 31, 2016, on North Robert A Stalls. Carbondale Police Officer Trey Harris was shot in the eye as he and officer Corey Brinkley pursued the car as it left the scene of the Sunday shooting.

At approximately 11:30 p.m. on July 31, 2016, the two officers were patrolling in the 700 block of North Robert A. Stalls in Carbondale when they heard gunshots and observed a car speeding away from the area. Officers pursued the car on North Marion and Dillinger Road at speeds exceeding 90 miles per hour. During the chase, several shots from a high-powered rifle were fired at the police car, one of which went through the windshield and struck Officer Harris in the eye. The officers abandoned the chase and proceeded to the hospital but not before Harris was able to give a description of the car and a partial license number. The car was located the next morning off Dewmaine School House Road, north of Carterville when a passerby reported to police that it was on fire.

Investigators determined that the vehicle had been purchased two days before by the defendant, Christian Reichert, who used a fake name and paid cash to buy it. He and an accomplice then stole license plates and put them on the vehicle so that it could not be traced. The evidence established that Reichert and others had conspired together to distribute cannabis during the period of January 2015 through the first week of August 2016. Earlier in the week prior to the chase, customers had taken 15 pounds of cannabis from members of this conspiracy without paying the full price of \$49,000 dollars. On July 31, 2016, several members of the conspiracy traveled from Kansas to Carbondale to retaliate against the customers who had not paid for the cannabis, and in doing so, they drove the car which was purchased by Reichert to shoot at

those customers in Carbondale. Investigators recovered shell casings from inside the burned vehicle and on Dillinger road.

In addition to purchasing the car involved in the shooting, the evidence showed that Reichert and co-conspirator Brandon C.M. Jones traveled to Oregon with over \$100,000 in cash hidden in the spare tire of a vehicle which was being pulled on a trailer to pay for over 100 pounds of Cannabis which they packed into the tires of the same trailered vehicle and transported to Illinois for distribution. Reichert had rented a house for storage of the cannabis until it could be distributed prior to the trip. The house, located at Lake of Egypt, was searched and investigators found 42 pounds of cannabis individually wrapped in ½ pound quantities in a safe. Investigators also found behind the residence shell casing which had been shot from the same firearm as the casings found on Dillinger road.

On July 12, 2018, a customer of the organization, co-defendant William M. Cummins, 29, of Harrisburg, Illinois, entered a plea of guilty to conspiracy to possess with the intent to deliver more than 5,000 grams of a substance containing cannabis, a Class 1 felony. He was sentenced to serve 48 months of probation and to pay a total fine and costs exceeding \$36,000.

On August 6, 2018, Brandon C.M. Jones, 26, of Carterville, Illinois, pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to possess with the intent to deliver more than 5,000 grams of a substance containing cannabis, a Class 1 felony; and cannabis trafficking, a Class X felony. In exchange for his agreement to cooperate, he received concurrent sentences of 15 and 18 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections to be followed by a total of three (3) years of mandatory supervised release.

On August 8, 2016, a distributor of the organization, Jared J. Jones, 27, of Carterville, pleaded guilty to the charge of conspiracy to possess with the intent to deliver more than 5,000 grams of a substance containing cannabis, a Class 1 felony. He was sentenced to ten (10) years in the Illinois Department of Corrections, followed by a two (2) year period of mandatory supervised release in exchange for his agreement to cooperate with authorities.

The remaining co-defendant, Alex B. Karcher, 24, of Salina, Kansas, is in custody pending trial on charges of conspiracy to possess with the intent to deliver more than 5,000 grams of a substance containing cannabis, a Class 1 felony, aggravated battery and multiple counts of aggravated discharge of a firearm, all which are Class X felonies. Karcher remains in custody in the Jackson County Jail pending trial. ***An Indictment is merely a charge and not evidence. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.***

This case was investigated by the Illinois State Police, the Jackson County Sheriff's Department, the Carbondale Police Department, the Illinois State Police Metro-East Forensic Science Lab, the United States Marshal's Service and the FBI, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and the Salina, Kansas Police Department. State's Attorney Michael Carr was responsible for the prosecutions.