

Arrested For Running Multimillion-Dollar Black Market Marijuana Enterprise

A Milton woman was arrested today and charged in federal court in Boston in connection with her ownership and management of Northern Herb, a black-market marijuana delivery service that operated in Massachusetts from 2015 to 2018.

Deana Martin, 51, was charged with one count of conspiring to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana. She will appear in federal court in Boston later today.

According to the charging document, Martin owned and managed Northern Herb, which operated a website offering marijuana (including raw marijuana, pre-rolled cigarettes, and marijuana edibles) for sale. While Northern Herb purported to provide medical marijuana, it did not require a customer to provide proof of a medical marijuana card. Furthermore, it is alleged that Northern Herb would deliver marijuana to unattended locations (such as a front door or hallway) where unknown third parties might have access to it. Northern Herb used locations in Canton, Milton, Foxborough, and Hyde Park to store and distribute marijuana, and employed at least 25 workers.

It is further alleged that Martin planned for Northern Herb to use a sales team that would be incentivized based on monthly marijuana sales. One such incentivized tier, for instance, would be for selling more than 10 pounds of marijuana per month.

From May 2016 through July 2018, Northern Herb allegedly had total revenue exceeding \$14 million, and Martin herself claimed an income of \$80,000 per month. Martin controlled numerous bank accounts into which funds derived from Northern

Herb sales were laundered, and she used several accounts in another person's name to conceal her control over this money and to hide it from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. Martin allegedly used money from Northern Herb sales to pay more than \$300,000 towards the mortgage on her house and to buy a 2017 Porsche Boxster, among other things.

It is further alleged that Northern Herb did not withhold or pay taxes on its millions of dollars in marijuana sales. In an email referencing cannabis taxes charged by one state government, Martin wrote: "Zero taxes is still better." Northern Herb did not remit or pay employment taxes in connection with its workforce or issue its employees W-2s or 1099s.

The charge provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of five years and no greater than 40 years in prison, a minimum of four years and up to a lifetime of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$5 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Division; and Kristina O'Connell, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston, made the announcement today. The United States Postal Inspection Service also provided valuable assistance with this investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney William Abely of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the complaint are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.