The J Group's

EDLA SENTENCING NEWSLETTER

WEEK OF
NOV 1 TO NOV 7

NOVEMBER 11, 2026 ISSUE

Stolen Mail and more...

.... see what happened this past week in the Eastern District of Louisiana

CASE SPOTLIGHT

United States v. Carpenter
26-cr-071

What's the Basis? According to the factual basis, reports of opened packages with missing contents led investigators to ***Carpenter***, a contract delivery driver responsible for transporting mail from the New Orleans Processing and Distribution Center to the Ponchatoula Post Office.

USPS Office of Inspector General agents placed a test package containing a substance mimicking marijuana in a mail bin assigned to *Carpenter*. Surveillance showed him removing and retaining the package instead of delivering it.

When agents approached him after his deliveries, ***Carpenter*** waived his Miranda rights and **admitted taking the package because he believed it contained marijuana and intended to keep the contents. He also admitted taking marijuana from mail on prior occasions. He then resigned from his position.**

What's the Violation? ***Carpenter*** pled guilty to **Possession of Stolen Mail**, in violation of ***18 U.S.C. § 1708***.

What's the Punishment? The Honorable Lance M. Africk sentenced ***Carpenter*** to **3 years of probation, including 3 months of home curfew with GPS monitoring, 50 hours of community service, and a $1,000 fine**.

This Week's Other Matters

U.S. v. Hall, 25-cr-277

Charge: Distribution of 5 Kilograms or More of a Mixture Containing Cocaine; Possession with Intent to Distribute 500 Grams or More of a Mixture Containing Cocaine; Felon in Possession of a Firearm
(21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1), (b)(1)(A), (b)(1)(B); 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(g)(1), 924(a)(8))
Sentence: 120 months of imprisonment and 5 years of supervised release.
Judge: Honorable Lance M. Africk

WHAT'S THAT STATUTE?

CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE VIOLATIONS INCLUDED IN THIS WEEK'S EDITION

- 18 U.S.C. § 371
- 18 U.S.C. § 922
- 18 U.S.C. § 924
- 18 U.S.C. § 1343
- 18 U.S.C. § 1708
- 21 U.S.C. § 841



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U.S. v. Lawrence, 24-cr-105

Charge: Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud
(18 U.S.C. §§ 371, 1343)
Sentence: 2 years of probation, 100 hours of community service, and $49,520.21 in restitution.
Judge: Honorable Wendy B. Vitter

U.S. v. Pipkins, 14-cr-282

Violation of Mandatory Conditions of Supervised Release: *Committing another crime and unlawfully possessing a controlled substance.*
Sentence: 12 months of imprisonment, consecutive to the sentence imposed in Case No. 23-cr-233. No additional supervised release imposed.
Judge: Honorable Carl J. Barbier

U.S. v. Ray, 07-cr-048

Violation of Mandatory and Standard Conditions of Supervised Release*: Traveling to New Orleans without approval and using an opiate medication prescribed to another person.*
Sentence: Time served. No additional supervised release imposed.
Judge: Honorable Wendy B. Vitter

Did You Know?

A Government "setup" does not necessarily establish entrapment. **This week's Case Spotlight involved a package deliberately placed by USPS Office of Inspector General agents in the mail the defendant was responsible for delivering. The package contained a substance mimicking marijuana, and agents watched to determine whether he would deliver it or take it for himself**.

Postal investigators have used similar operations involving identifiable mail containing currency, gift cards, or credit cards. These controlled items allow investigators to observe how suspected theft occurs and connect a particular person to the missing mail.

Government involvement alone does not establish entrapment. The defense involves two related questions: whether the government induced the offense and whether the defendant lacked a predisposition to commit it. **Simply providing an opportunity, including through deception, generally falls short of inducement.**

In this week's Case Spotlight, the defendant's admitted facts weigh against an entrapment defense. The factual basis describes agents placing the package in his ordinary delivery stream, without describing pressure or persuasion to steal it. More significantly, the defendant admitted previously taking marijuana from mail he was responsible for delivering. That admission supports a willingness to engage in the conduct before agents introduced the test package.

In other words, while the Government supplied the opportunity, the *available* facts indicate that the willingness to take the package already existed.