

# DEA to Drug Ring with Hollywood Ties: "That's a Wrap"

## *Swiss and L.A.-based companies involved in drug and weapons trafficking*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) today announced the successful results of *Operation Director's Cut*, a two-year investigation involving an international ecstasy and weapons trafficking organization with Hollywood connections.

Seven arrests took place in the case, including those of Limelight Films, Inc. Chief Executive Officer Bruno D'Esclavelles of Los Angeles, Chief Financial Officer David Liberman, and three other associates. Also arrested was Alexandre De Basseville of Switzerland and Los Angeles. De Basseville is an executive board member of ADB Swiss S.A., a Swiss-based financial, business, and consulting service that owns the L.A.-based Limelight Films, Inc. Various media outlets have reported that De Basseville is engaged to Kiera Chaplin, granddaughter of the legendary film actor Charlie Chaplin. According to the Limelight Films, Inc. website Kiera Chaplin serves as an executive.

De Basseville and D'Esclavelles were arrested in Arlington, Virginia and charged with conspiracy to distribute MDMA (ecstasy). Liberman was charged with conspiring to launder money.

"The men we arrested have laundered hundreds of thousands of dollars -- money used to further their drug and weapons trade to endanger our neighborhoods and bleed our communities," said DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy. "This operation demonstrates once again the poisoning influence of drug money, and the greed that causes some people to hurt the lives of the many."

According to criminal complaints filed in federal court, Alexandre De Basseville met repeatedly with undercover agents over the past two years, posing as international drug traffickers. De Basseville offered to launder drug proceeds, supply weapons and broker ecstasy deals for the undercover agents. The agents met with De Basseville and several of his associates, including the other six individuals charged, in various locations, including Arlington, Virginia; Miami, Florida; Los Angeles, California; Amsterdam; the Netherlands; and Geneva, Switzerland. On two occasions, De Basseville and D'Esclavelles took cash, totaling \$300,000, which they believed to be drug proceeds, and laundered it for the undercover agents using their Los Angeles business, Limelight Films, Inc.

In February 2006, de Basseville and d'Esclavelles arranged for the sale of ecstasy from the Netherlands by Thomas Frischknecht to an undercover agent. Frischknecht sent the agent a package containing 10,000 pills, which the agent received in Arlington, Virginia. Thereafter, de Basseville, d'Esclavelles and Frischknecht agreed to sell the agent 500,000

pills in the Netherlands. Frischknecht was arrested in the Netherlands as the undercover agent negotiated for the delivery of 500,000 ecstasy pills.

Thomas Frischknecht, age 26, of Switzerland, was arrested in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and charged with conspiracy to import ecstasy. Authorities also arrested Fabian Pruvot, age 37, Andre Prikazhikov, age 31, and Brian Delansky, age 33, all of Los Angeles, California. Pruvot and Liberman were charged with conspiracy to launder money. Prikazhikov and Delansky were charged with conspiracy to possess firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking.

This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Internal Revenue Service; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Customs Border Patrol; Arlington County Police Department, Metropolitan (D.C.) Police Department. The United States Attorney's Office also received considerable assistance from law enforcement authorities in the Netherlands and Switzerland. The case is an OCDETF (Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force) investigation. The prosecution of the case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorneys James L. Trump and Steven D. Mellin and Special Assistant United States Attorney Daniel Grooms.

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