



# Department of Justice

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## **COSBY COUPLE ARRESTED FOR DRUG, FIREARMS AND LACEY ACT VIOLATIONS**

### *Defendants organizing trips to Florida "pill mills"*

GREENEVILLE, Tenn — Johnny Carl Grooms, 58, and Rosalba Ibarra Grooms, 32, of Cosby, Tennessee, were arrested by agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and United States Marshals Service (USMS) after the couple was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges involving drug trafficking, firearms violations, illegal trafficking in ginseng.

Rosalba Grooms was arrested on August 18, 2010, and made her initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Dennis Inman on August 19, 2010. She was temporarily detained pending a detention hearing at 9:00 a.m., on August 23, 2010. Johnny Grooms was arrested today and will also make his initial appearance at 9:00 a.m., on August 23, 2010.

The 19-count indictment charges the couple with conspiring to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute oxycodone, a Schedule II drug. The couple and others are alleged to have traveled by commercial airlines and automobiles to Florida to obtain oxycodone and other drugs for distribution in eastern Tennessee. The indictment also charges Johnny Grooms with conspiring with others to distribute cocaine and distributing cocaine on two occasions in February 2009. He is also charged with possessing firearms as a convicted felon and possessing firearms in furtherance of the drug trafficking crimes.

Additionally, Johnny Grooms is charged with illegally trafficking in American ginseng in violation of the Lacey Act, a century-old federal law enacted to combat the illegal trafficking in wildlife, fish and plants. He is charged with trafficking in both ginseng taken in violation of Tennessee state law as well as ginseng taken illegally from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in violation of federal law. The indictment alleges that he conducted his criminal activities from the Park Entrance Grocery in Cosby, often trading oxycodone for ginseng and firearms.

If convicted, Johnny Grooms faces penalties of up to life in prison and fines of up to \$4,000,000. Rosalba Grooms faces penalties of up to 20 years in prison and fines of up to \$1,000,000. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of property used in the drug trafficking, firearms, and Lacey Act violations.

The investigation was conducted by DEA, USFWS, and ATF with the assistance of the USMS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee Highway Patrol, the National Park Service, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, and the Cocke County Sheriff's Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Neil Smith will represent the United States.

Members of the public are reminded that these are only charges and that every person is presumed innocent until their guilt has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

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