

## Ohio attorneys in drug scandal seek plea deals

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Two Columbus attorneys accused of laundering money for a drug ring that brought \$100 million in illegal drugs to central Ohio from Arizona are scheduled to plead guilty early next year.

**Charles W. McGowan**, 41, and **Kyle Hunter**, 40, plan to plead guilty Jan. 6 in federal court to charges of laundering money for the drug ring run by Donald Dailey Jr.

Dailey, of Pataskala, was sentenced in October to 20 years in prison for his leadership of the ring, which involved cash and drugs crisscrossing the country in all types of vehicles.

The roles of **McGowan** and **Hunter** had been kept quiet while prosecutors worked out plea deals.

Prosecutors say Dailey paid **McGowan** to find attorneys for "drug mules" who were caught in other states. Payments were made in cash, often stashed in containers such as doughnut boxes or fast food bags.

The operations of the ring have become clearer to federal investigators as charges they pressed against ring participants led to several becoming informants.

Investigators gathered information on **McGowan** and **Hunter** in August, when they searched the law offices of **McGowan** and **Hunter** in Columbus and obtained a computer, as well as financial records. Investigators also searched each man's home.

Court records show **McGowan** is accused of laundering \$30,000 to \$70,000 in drug money and failing to report cash payments of \$120,000 to \$200,000. An agreement signed by **McGowan** in October says he will plead guilty to laundering money and failing to report cash payments of \$10,000.

The first charge could bring **McGowan** 20 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine, while the second could bring five years and a \$25,000 fine. His attorney, Gregory Peterson, said he ran a general law practice.

**Hunter** was charged with getting \$100,000 in cash and not reporting it as required by law. His plea agreement calls for the surrender of Columbus property bought with drug proceeds, and he could get five years in prison and a \$25,000 fine.

**Hunter's** attorney, Scott Weisman, would not comment about the case to The Columbus Dispatch. Weisman told The Associated Press Saturday he declined to comment because his client's case was still ongoing.