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## NEWS RELEASE

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Today the Honorable Judge Bruce Watson sentenced Helene Biggane to serve 270 days in jail for maintaining a residence for the cultivation of marijuana. On Monday, February 9, 2009 the co-defendant, John Irwin was also sentenced to 270 days for his conviction of the same crime.

The facts of the case are as follows: on October 18, 2007 law enforcement became aware of a possible marijuana grow at 2101 11<sup>th</sup> Street in Arcata. Arcata Police officers went to that address and found a pickup parked in the driveway that had large plastic bags in the bed of the truck that had a strong smell of marijuana. The officer could hear the sound of fans coming from inside the house and could smell the odor of marijuana emanating from the residence. A search warrant was prepared and served by the Humboldt County Drug Task force. The entire 3 bedroom house and garage was being utilized to grow marijuana. Officers found 686 growing plants, 95 drying plants (with a weight of 58 pounds), 114 grams of bud, 2,209 grams of trim, a small quantity of concentrated cannabis, scales, packaging materials and two handguns and paperwork indicating each defendants' use of the residence.

Ms. Biggane, who is 25 years old, originally moved here from San Diego to attend college. Her parents purchased the home for her while she was attending school. She currently lives some of the year in Nicaragua where she owns a restaurant. Mr. Irwin, who is 27, also moved here from San Diego and cared for the plants while she was in Nicaragua. The P.G. & E. records for that residence showed extremely high usage. From August 2006-March 2007 the records showed kilowatt hours to range from 3,765-5,828. From June 2007-October 2007 the records showed kilowatt hours to range from 3,618 -4,908. Ms. Biggane was paying the P.G. & E. bills which exceeded \$1,000 twelve separate times during the August 2006-October 2007 time frame. (The usage resulted in P.G.&E. bills for \$1551; \$1,878 and \$2,026.)

The cases were prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Maggie Fleming. Mr. Irwin was represented by Manny Daskal and Ms. Biggane by Jeff Schwartz.