

**Beware of the Innocent-Sounding Favors That Your “Friends”
Ask You to Do for Them!**

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During the last few months, I have seen some very troubling cases involving people who were arrested for violations of the drug trafficking laws under circumstances that many people experience every day. Therefore, I want to write briefly about a couple of true cases to show you how you can sometimes get in trouble even without knowingly participating in a drug deal.

My first example has come up in countless criminal cases. A husband is dealing drugs and stores his drugs in his residence. The police get information about it, obtain a search warrant, and find the drugs. They arrest both the husband and his wife. Even if the wife has nothing to do with her husband’s drug dealing, if she knows about it and continues to live in that home while it is going on, she can be convicted of a felony known as maintaining a dwelling for illegal purposes. Either using drugs or storing drugs are the most common such purposes.

My next example occurs regularly. Two men drive up to deliver drugs to a third person that they think is their friend. The “friend” has been arrested and is working for the police to set up a controlled buy and delivery of drugs. One of the two men asked the other for a ride to the store without telling him the purpose of going there or that he was carrying drugs in the bag he had with him. Even so, the police are going to arrest both of them because it will appear to them that both men were engaged in that drug delivery together. Even if the innocent man is later found not guilty at trial, he will still probably spend many months in jail, unable to post bond, because he was present at the delivery and was arrested there.

Another example is also common. A husband is dealing drugs and stores the drugs in a vehicle registered in his wife’s name. She gets stopped for a traffic violation, the drugs are discovered, and she is arrested. In one tragic case of that type, a wife drove her children to school and, as she left the school, someone ran a red light and struck her vehicle. The impact of the collision knocked a bag of drugs out from under the seat and the contents spilled out on the floorboards. They were clearly recognizable as illegal drugs and were visible to anyone standing beside the vehicle. The police were called to the accident, and the wife was arrested for cocaine trafficking. Although she swore that she knew nothing about the drugs, the vehicle was registered in her name and she was operating it at the time that the drugs were discovered. Incredibly, her husband refused to come forward and take responsibility, and the wife was convicted and sent to prison. The husband abandoned their five children and fled to his native country, leaving the wife in prison for crimes that he had committed, and leaving the children in foster care.

The point to be made is simple. It is easier to avoid trouble than it is to get out of trouble if you get arrested. Be aware of what is going on around you, and stay away from illegal activity.

If someone asks you to do them a favor, like signing for a package, wiring some money, driving them someplace, or holding a package for them until someone else comes to pick it up, ask questions. Make sure that what you are about to get involved in is not illegal. And if you decide to involve yourself in criminal activity, at least do it away from home and do not involve your spouse or children.

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