

### **Drug Baron's wife will have to pay back his profits**

The wife of a convicted drug trafficker faces losing assets worth millions of pounds for laundering her husband's dirty money.

A Newcastle jury found 29 year old Katie Ferguson guilty of money laundering after hearing how her husband, Brian Christopher Ferguson, transferred two houses, including their £1.2m home, into his wife's name to conceal them from the Child Support Agency.

The Fergusons were arrested in February 2008 with almost £2.5m worth of amphetamines and cannabis in a van close to Mr Ferguson's business premises, Herrington Salvage, in Sunderland.

When SOCA officers searched their home they found drug wrappings, £8,000 cash and a money counting machine in a secret room hidden behind a wooden panel.

CCTV footage retrieved from the Fergusons' personal security system showed Brian Ferguson in his garden, trying to dispose of evidence by burning boxes which contained drugs. Ferguson pleaded guilty to drugs offences in December 2009.

The Newcastle Crown Court jury accepted that the Fergusons had amassed their property portfolio, including their seven bedroom, six bathroom home, through the proceeds of crime.

Gerry Smyth, SOCA, said:

This result should worry criminals everywhere who think that hiding their profits behind a family member puts them out of reach. SOCA is determined to ensure that crime doesn't pay. Brian and Katie Ferguson have found that out the hard way, and now it's time for them to hand the money back.

Sentencing is expected to take place 2nd August 2010.