

# Four found not guilty of money laundering

■ The trial was part of Operation PROMO, a case that led to 28 indictments.

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TAMPA — It was the same case that sent a much-lauded Tampa police officer to prison last year. But on Thursday, there was a very different outcome for the latest defendants in the Operation PROMO money-laundering investigation.

A federal jury Thursday found four men not guilty of laundering Colombian drug money from U.S. streets to Merrill Lynch offices in Panama City. And in a new twist for a money-laundering trial, one of the defendants successfully used an insanity defense by claiming his manic-depressive condition rendered him "unable to appreciate his actions."

Frank L. Greene, 71, a retired senior vice president with Merrill Lynch; Steven Mills, 30, a Merrill Lynch account executive in Panama City; Charles McFadden, 66, a former senior partner with Peat Marwick; and Ricardo Leyton, a Panamanian lawyer, were acquitted of charges that they conspired to commit money laundering, according to Gary Trombley, Greene's attorney.

"It's an absolute 100 percent . . . condemnation of government conduct," said George Tragos, McFadden's attorney. "They should be fighting crime in the U.S., not traveling around the world creating crime where there isn't any."

Tragos referred to Robert Mazur, the legendary Drug Enforcement Administration agent who helped bring down the Bank of Credit and Commerce International in 1988.

Mazur began the undercover Operation PROMO in 1991, acting the part of a Sarasota businessman representing Colombian drug lords to international executives in South America. The operation led to 28 indictments of money-laundering against people from the United States, Panama and Colombia.

Mazur's PROMO team included former Tampa police officer Javier Willie Guzman, 34, a one-time rising star on the force who eventually pleaded guilty to starting his own laundering operation with the Colombians he was assigned to investigate. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison in August.