

POSSESSION EQUALS DEPORTATION

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Body

Resident aliens who possess any amount of illegal drugs must be deported and cannot prove the "good moral character" that might allow them to return, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected an appeal by a Nigerian citizen who arrived on a student visa and faced deportation because of a February 1990 conviction for cocaine possession.

Larry Bazuaye, who is married to a U.S. citizen and has a child who is also a citizen, was convicted of having a small amount of the drug while he was a student in Los Angeles, said his lawyer, Judith Wood. She said Bazuaye was sentenced to probation, no longer uses drugs and has no subsequent criminal record. The ruling frees the Immigration and Naturalization Service to follow through on its deportation proceedings against Bazuaye. And once deported, he will never be allowed to re-enter.

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