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Former bong seller convicted

He peddled detox products

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COVINGTON - A former MainStrasse Village business owner pleaded guilty this week to peddling detoxification products marketed as a way to beat mandatory drug testing.

Kristin Michael Kordenbrock, 36, of Covington was sentenced Tuesday to two years' felony diversion by Kenton Circuit Judge Martin Sheehan.

Felony diversion is the same as probation except the charge is dismissed if the defendant successfully completes the terms of the program.

It is a common alternative sentence given to defendants with little or no criminal history.

Kordenbrock pleaded guilty to criminal simulation, a relatively new Kentucky law. The statute makes it a felony to market, distribute or sell any kit marketed as a way to beat a drug test.

"The type of business this defendant was operating was not the kind of quality, family-friendly business we want in Kenton County," Commonwealth's Attorney Rob Sanders said.

When Kordenbrock was arrested in July, Covington police carted off most of the merchandise from his shop. The goods included hand-blown glass bongs.

As part of the plea agreement, Kordenbrock agreed to forfeit the thousands of dollars in merchandise. An estimated 75 percent, or more, of the confiscated items were related to the concealment or consumption of illegal narcotics, officials said.

Kordenbrock's attorney, Shannon Sexton, said his client took the plea after the judge indicated he might rule against the admissibility of defense testimony. Sexton wanted to call an expert witness to say Kordenbrock wasn't in violation of the law because the detoxification products do not work as advertised.

"Whether or not the product successfully defeats drug tests is not an element of the crime," Sanders said. "If the product purports to defeat drug tests, that's enough to get convicted of criminal simulation."

Sexton had also hired a private investigator who had bought similar detoxification products at a national chain of diet and nutrition stores.

Sanders said that fact also didn't absolve Kordenbrock of a crime.

Sexton says he isn't aware of anyone else in Kentucky being prosecuted under the law and it was unclear how courts may rule on legal issues he wanted to raise.

"Mr. Kordenbrock never set out to break the law," Sexton said. "I know he didn't realize the new law that had passed and the implication of it. This should serve as a warning to anyone selling these cleansing products. They could be charged with a felony, too."

Sexton said his client was just trying to be a successful businessman. Kordenbrock, a glass blower by trade, remains unemployed, Sexton said.
