

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pennsauken Man Sentenced to 72 Months in Federal Prison for Heroin Trafficking Conspiracy

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Pennsauken man was sentenced to 72 months in federal prison today for his role in a heroin distribution ring that utilized the potentially fatal drug fentanyl in packaging street level sales of heroin, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Noel L. Hillman also ordered Jaime Castellar, 32, to serve 5 years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term.

Castellar has been held without bail since his arrest on Sept. 28, 2006, by Special Agents of the FBI's Philadelphia Division and officers with the Philadelphia Police Department. At the time of his arrest, Castellar had been a fugitive since July 21, 2006, when he was charged by Police Officers with the Pennsauken Police Department.

Castellar pleaded guilty before Judge Hillman on April 27, 2007, to a one-count Superseding Information that charged him with conspiracy to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin.

At his plea hearing, Castellar admitted that in November 2005 he rented a house on Union Avenue in Pennsauken that was then used until July 2006 to package heroin in both bulk form and for street-level distribution. Castellar admitted that he kept in the house various items that were used to package heroin, including scales, grinders, and glassine baggies stamped with various logos. Castellar stated the glassine baggies stamped with logos – such as “slow motion,” “trap star,” “candy man,” “empire,” “500 degree3z,” “save a lot” and “mummy” – were used to bag heroin that was sold at various street corners in the Camden area.

Castellar admitted he packaged the heroin with at least six other individuals. Castellar admitted that over the life of the conspiracy, he distributed and possessed with intent to distribute more than 100 grams of heroin as part of this organization.

Furthermore, Castellar agreed that the substances recovered by law enforcement authorities from his rented house on July 21, 2006, included approximately 587 grams of heroin and 309 grams of fentanyl. According to the DEA, fentanyls are extensively used for anesthesia and analgesia, and have biological effects indistinguishable from those of heroin, with the exception that fentanyl may be hundreds of times more potent. The much higher potency levels may have lead to many fatal overdoses. Castellar admitted that those drugs were possessed with the intent to be distributed by members of the conspiracy.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Hillman consulted the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and

other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Police Officers with Pennsauken Police Department, under the direction of Chief John Coffey, along with Investigators from the member agencies of the Camden HIDTA, under the direction of Camden County Prosecutor Warren W. Faulk, and Special Agents of the DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

Christie also thanked Special Agents of the FBI's Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Janice K. Fedarck, and Philadelphia Police Officers, under the direction of Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey, for their assistance in arresting the defendant.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Richardson of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Jose Ongay, Esq. Philadelphia