

NEWS

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Heroin Trafficker Sentenced to 228 months

(More)

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TRENTON – A Trenton man was sentenced to 228 months in federal prison today for conspiring to distribute heroin in Trenton, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

U.S. District Judge Mary L. Cooper also ordered Sherman Houser, 31, a.k.a. “Jermaine McKelly,” to serve 4 years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term.

On June 20, 2007, Pack, Wilcox and Houser were charged in a four-count Indictment. At the time, the defendants were being held on state charges.

On May 22, 2008, Houser pleaded guilty before Judge Cooper to one count each of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin and possession with intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin.

Wilcox pleaded guilty on March 6, 2008 to one count of possession with intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin. On Jan. 28, 2008, Pack pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy and two counts of possessing with intent to distribute 100 grams or more of heroin.

At their plea hearings, the defendants admitted that from October 2006 to January 2007, they participated with each other in a heroin trafficking conspiracy.

Houser was arrested by Special Agents of DEA and Investigators with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office on January 29, 2007, while in a taxi on the NJ Turnpike and allegedly in possession of more than 100 grams of heroin. Pack was arrested in another vehicle that was following the taxi. Wilcox was arrested by the local authorities for conspiracy to possess heroin in February 2007.

Judge Cooper had previously sentenced Houser's co-defendants, Pierce Pack, 31 of Trenton, and Bruce Wilcox, 30, of Ewing, to prison terms of 80 months and 188 months, respectively.

In determining the actual sentences, Judge Cooper 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 Special Agents of DEA, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, and Investigators with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini, Jr., with the investigation leading to the Indictment.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jimmy Kitchen of the Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorneys:

Houser - Hal K. Haveson, Esq. Trenton

Pack - Catherine Brown, Esq. Morristown

Wilcox - John Holliday, Esq. Trenton