



Department of Justice

Carlton S. Shier, IV
Acting United States Attorney
Eastern District of Kentucky

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CONTACT: Gabrielle Dudgeon
PHONE: (859) 685-4887
E-MAIL: gabrielle.dudgeon@usdoj.gov

Dry Ridge Man Sentenced to 264 Months for Armed Methamphetamine Trafficking

COVINGTON, Ky. – A Dry Ridge, Kentucky, man, Paul Stapleton, 48, was sentenced Friday to 264 months in federal prison, by U.S. District Judge David Bunning, for conspiring to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine and possession of a short-barreled shotgun in furtherance of his drug trafficking.

Stapleton led a conspiracy that distributed more than 1.5 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine throughout Northern Kentucky. Agents seized significant amounts of methamphetamine in Campbell and Grant Counties, on October 21, 2019, and seized multiple firearms, including two short-barreled shotguns from the Grant County residence that was the focus of the conspiracy. Stapleton had four prior felony convictions for drug offenses and committed these crimes while on parole.

Several of Stapleton's co-conspirators have already been sentenced to prison terms: Steven Green (96 months); Steven Ballard (15 months); Lee Grimm (72 months); Donald Kaylor (54 months); A.J. Phillips (120 months); Dewey Phillips (36 months); George Pickett (37 months); Crystal Prewitt (54 months); Joseph Dylan Smith (50 months); Morgan Smith (12 months and one day); April Stapleton 60 months; Jeremy Thomas (54 months); and Amber Turner (18 months).

Stapleton pleaded guilty in April 2021.

Under federal law, the defendants must serve 85 percent of their prison sentences. Upon his release, Stapleton will also be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for five years.

Carlton S. Shier IV, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Shawn Morrow, Special Agent in Charge, ATF, Louisville Field Division; Christopher Connors, Director of the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force; and Colonel Lee Estep, Chief of the Bellevue Police Department, jointly announced the sentences.

The investigation was conducted by ATF, the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force, and the Bellevue Police Department. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony Bracke.

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