



U. S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 22, 2021

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HAINES CITY MAN RECEIVES TWELVE YEARS IN PRISON **FOR TALLAHASSEE DRUG TRAFFICKING OFFENSES**

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA –Taree Lamott Armstrong, 30, of Haines City, Florida, has been sentenced to twelve years in federal prison after pleading guilty to multiple drug-trafficking offenses. Jason R. Coody, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the sentence.

According to court documents, on March 25, 2020, Armstrong was stopped by a trooper with the Florida Highway Patrol for having a license plate attached to the wrong vehicle. During the traffic stop, the trooper found approximately \$1520 and two bags of marijuana in Armstrong's pockets. A search of Armstrong's vehicle revealed cocaine, crack cocaine, hydrocodone, 43.6 grams of methamphetamine, and 2.25 pounds of marijuana. Armstrong was arrested on state charges and released on bond.

On July 2, 2020, Armstrong was a passenger in a traffic crash which occurred in Tallahassee. During the accident investigation, officers of the Tallahassee Police Department discovered that Armstrong attempted to hide two black bags which contained marijuana, crack cocaine, and drug paraphernalia associated with the sale of controlled substances. Officers also discovered approximately \$1453 in Armstrong's pockets. Armstrong was arrested on state charges and was again released on bond.

On August 4, 2020, Armstrong was federally indicted for the previous drug-related charges. Armstrong was arrested by the Drug Enforcement Administration, with the assistance of the Florida Highway Patrol, on August 6, 2020, to address the federal charges. Upon his arrest, agents seized methamphetamine, marijuana, synthetic marijuana, approximately \$1160 in cash, and two digital scales from his vehicle.

Armstrong's prior criminal history includes nine felony convictions, several of which involve narcotics distribution and violence against law enforcement officers. Given the nature of his prior felony convictions, Armstrong qualified as a Career Offender and was subject to increased Federal sentencing penalties.

“Those who repeatedly commit serious crimes are deserving of significant prison sentences,” stated Acting U.S. Attorney Coody. “This career criminal has demonstrated his unwillingness to abide by the law, committing repeated drug crimes – while on bond for identical violations. Given the outstanding work of our state, local, and federal law enforcement partners, he will no longer be distributing drugs in our community.”

“As always, the Drug Enforcement Administration is committed to working with our law enforcement partners as these relationships are vital to protecting our communities,” said DEA Miami Field Division Acting Special Agent in Charge La Verne Hibbert. “The strong partnership with the Florida Highway Patrol and Tallahassee Police Department allowed us to quickly coordinate efforts that led directly to another career criminal being taken off our streets.”

This sentence resulted from an investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Florida Highway Patrol, and the Tallahassee Police Department. Assistant United States Attorneys James A. McCain prosecuted the case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), the centerpiece of the Department of Justice’s violent crime reduction efforts. PSN is an evidence-based program proven to be effective at reducing violent crime. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders works together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime. Here in Tallahassee, the Sheriff’s ALLinLEON initiative has focused on enforcement, but also engaged community volunteers to regularly take at-risk youth to places of worship, activated Neighborhood Crime Watch programs, and conducted other activities to target neighborhoods that are perennial hotspots for violence. The effort also aims to help connect individuals who are reentering the community from incarceration with education, job skills and substance abuse treatment.

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