



# Department of Justice

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## **Last Defendant Sentenced in Large Fentanyl Trafficking Conspiracy**

**LEXINGTON, Ky.** — A Richmond, Ky., man, Bud Hembree, 49, was sentenced on Tuesday to 230 months in prison, by Chief U.S. District Judge Danny Reeves, for conspiracy to distribute 40 grams of more of fentanyl and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl.

According to Hembree's plea agreement, on December 14, 2020, law enforcement arrested Hembree and found approximately 17 grams of fentanyl on his person. Law enforcement monitored Hembree's jail calls while he was detained, revealing that he directed his other co-defendants to distribute fentanyl while he was in jail.

Hembree pleaded guilty in May 2022. Hembree's co-defendants have previously been sentenced for their roles in the conspiracy and received the following sentences:

- Leon H. Benson, 37, of Berea, Ky., received 105 months in prison, followed by six years of supervised release.
- Shanquenta V. Bulley, 27, from Berea, received 36 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release.
- Claudia D. Gibson, 39, from Richmond, received 37 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release.
- Justin M. Howell, 38, from Richmond, received 255 months in prison, followed by eight years of supervised release.
- Tiffany A. McCormick, 42, from Richmond, received 87 months in prison, followed by six years of supervised release.
- Joseph W. McElroy, 42, from Richmond, received 240 months in prison, followed by six years of supervised release.
- Misty D. Riddell, 30, from Berea, received 120 months in prison, followed by eight years of supervised release.

Under federal law, Hembree and his co-defendants must serve 85 percent of their prison sentences. Upon his release from prison, Hembree will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for six years.



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Carlton S. Shier, IV, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; J. Todd Scott, Special Agent in Charge, DEA, Louisville Field Division; Col. Phillip Burnett, Commissioner, Kentucky State Police; Chief James Ebert, Richmond Police Department; Chief Eric Scott, Berea Police Department; and Sheriff Mike Coyle, Madison County Sheriff's Office; jointly announced the sentences.

The investigation was conducted by the DEA, KSP, Madison County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force, Richmond Police Department; Berea Police Department; and Madison County Sheriff's Office. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Kiebler.

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