



# Department of Justice

Robert M. Duncan, Jr.  
United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Kentucky

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## Boyle County Man Pleads Guilty to Drug Trafficking and Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** - Richard Simpson, 33, of Danville, Kentucky, pled guilty in federal court on Wednesday, before U.S. District Judge Gregory Van Tatenhove, and admitted that he distributed heroin and was illegally in possession of a firearm as a convicted felon.

Simpson admitted that on August 19, 2018, he was found in his vehicle at a motel parking lot and arrested by law enforcement officers based on a warrant for a parole violation. Upon Simpson's arrest, officers found him in possession of 3.5 grams of heroin and \$5,150 in cash, along with a .45 caliber pistol. Simpson further admitted that inside his motel room he had additional heroin, methamphetamine, and another firearm. During a search of the room, officers located 13.066 grams of heroin, 19 grams of methamphetamine, and a .22 caliber pistol. Simpson admitted to possessing the heroin and methamphetamine with intent to distribute, and to unlawfully possessing firearms.

Simpson was indicted in October 2019.

Simpson was previously convicted of five felony offenses: Possession of a Controlled Substance First Degree, in 2018; Trafficking in a Controlled Substance First Degree (two counts), in 2013; Burglary Third Degree and Criminal Mischief, in 2006; and Possession of a Controlled Substance First Degree, in 2006.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Tommy Estevan, Special Agent in Charge for ATF; and Sheriff Derek Robbins, Boyle County Sheriff's Department, jointly announced the guilty plea.

The investigation was conducted by the ATF and Boyle County Sheriff's Department. The U.S. Attorney's Office was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Francisco Villalobos II.

Simpson is scheduled to be sentenced on June 9, 2020. He faces up to 40 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$2.25 million. However, any sentence will be imposed by the Court after its consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal sentencing statutes.

This is another case prosecuted as part of the Department of Justice's ["Project Safe Neighborhoods" Program \(PSN\)](#), which is a nationwide, crime reduction strategy aimed at

decreasing violent crime in communities. It involves a comprehensive approach to public safety — one that includes investigating and prosecuting crimes, along with prevention and reentry efforts. In the Eastern District of Kentucky, U.S. Attorney Robert Duncan Jr., coordinates PSN efforts in cooperation with various federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.

This case is part of Project Guardian, the Department of Justice's signature initiative to reduce gun violence and enforce federal firearms laws. Initiated by the Attorney General in the fall of 2019, Project Guardian draws upon the Department's past successful programs to reduce gun violence; enhances coordination of federal, state, local, and tribal authorities in investigating and prosecuting gun crimes; improves information-sharing by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives when a prohibited individual attempts to purchase a firearm and is denied by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), to include taking appropriate actions when a prospective purchaser is denied by the NICS for mental health reasons; and ensures that federal resources are directed at the criminals posing the greatest threat to our communities. Click [here](#) for more information about Project Guardian.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at [www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years](http://www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years).

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