



Department of Justice

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Kenton County Man Sentenced to 207 Months for Armed Drug Trafficking

LONDON, Ky. - An Independence, Kentucky man, Larry Coots, 54, was sentenced in federal court on Tuesday, to 207 months in prison, by U.S. District Judge Claria Horn Boom, for conspiring to distribute methamphetamine and possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking.

Coots admitted that beginning in May 2017 and continuing through December 2017, he conspired with Cynthia Burkhart, 38, to distribute methamphetamine in Perry County.

According to his plea agreement, Coots admitted that, on December 20, 2017, law enforcement executed a traffic stop on a vehicle driven by Burkhart, with Coots as a passenger. Coots fled on foot, but was eventually apprehended. Burkhart left the scene and was later located at a hotel, where she and Coots were staying. In their room, officers found two loaded firearms, drug paraphernalia, marijuana, pills, and six ounces of methamphetamine. Coots further admitted that he possessed one of the firearms for protection, in furtherance of his drug trafficking. Coots also had a prior felony conviction and was prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Coots pleaded guilty to the charges in July 2019.

Under federal law, Coots must serve 85 percent of his prison sentence and will be under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office for five years.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Brett R. Pitts, Acting Special Agent in Charge for DEA, Louisville Field Division; and Rodney Brewer, Commissioner of the Kentucky State Police, jointly made the announcement.

The investigation was directed by the DEA and KSP. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sam Dotson.

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.

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