



Department of Justice

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

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

Covington Man Sentenced to 132 Months for Armed Drug Trafficking

COVINGTON, Ky. - A Covington man, Dennis Duane Free, 32, was sentenced in federal court on Tuesday, to 132 months in prison, by U.S. District Judge David Bunning, after previously admitting to conspiring with others to distribute crack cocaine and possessing a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking.

In his plea agreement, Free admitted that he conspired with another individual, Robert Lee Copeland, to distribute crack cocaine between October 1, 2018 and April 2, 2019. On three occasions, Free sold crack cocaine to law enforcement personnel. On April 2, 2019, following his arrest, law enforcement officers seized additional crack cocaine, three firearms, and cash from his residence. In total, 14.2 grams of crack cocaine was seized. Free further admitted that he possessed the firearms found in his residence for protection in furtherance of his drug trafficking activities.

Free has three prior felony convictions, including convictions for felony possession of cocaine and being a convicted felon in possession of firearms.

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

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and James Robert Brown, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Louisville Field Office, jointly made the announcement.

The investigation was directed by the FBI Safe Street's Task Force. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Wade Napier.

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 also 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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