



Department of Justice

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Lexington Man Pleads Guilty to Armed Marijuana Trafficking and Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon

LEXINGTON, Ky. - A Lexington man, Javantez L. Masters, 21, pleaded guilty on Thursday, before Chief U.S. District Judge Danny Reeves, to possession with intent to distribute marijuana, possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

According to Masters' plea agreement, he admitted that, on September 23, 2019, searches of his residence and vehicle uncovered more than 16 kilograms of marijuana, approximately \$35,644 in cash, a loaded rifle, two pistols, , magazines, ammunition, and an active marijuana grow operation. He was also in possession of a vacuum sealer, vacuum sealer bags, and a money counter. Masters further admitted that he had the firearms for protection. Masters, who had a prior drug felony conviction, was prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Masters was indicted in February 2020.

Robert M. Duncan, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Shawn Morrow, Special Agent in Charge, ATF, Louisville Field Division; and Chief Lawrence Weathers, Lexington Police Department, jointly announced the guilty plea.

The investigation was conducted by ATF and the Lexington Police Department. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Cynthia Rieker.

Masters is scheduled to be sentenced on October 9, 2020. He faces up to 10 years in prison for the marijuana offense; a minimum of five years and a maximum of life for the armed drug trafficking offense, which must run consecutively to any other sentence imposed; and up to 10 years on the possession by a convicted felon offense. 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.

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