



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, March 16, 2021
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Final Defendant Sentenced to 284 Months in Methamphetamine Trafficking Conspiracy

COVINGTON, Ky. – A Florence man, John P. Darnell, 65, was sentenced on Friday to 248 months in federal prison, by U.S. District Judge David Bunning, for conspiring with others to distribute methamphetamine and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

According to his guilty plea agreement, Darnell conspired with others to distribute 500 grams of more of methamphetamine, between March 1, 2019 and December 11, 2019. Specifically, Darnell admitted that law enforcement executed a search warrant on a residence and located three firearms and four baggies of methamphetamine that belonged to him. Darnell further admitted that he was a convicted felon and was prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Darnell pleaded guilty in July 2020.

Darnell's co-defendants were previously sentenced. Buddy J. Pauly received 72 months in prison and three years of supervised release. Lori A Wilson received 30 months in prison and five years of supervised release.

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

Carlton S. Shier, IV, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; and Robert Brown, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Louisville Field Division, jointly announced the sentencing.

The investigation was conducted by the FBI. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony Bracke.

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, the U.S. Attorney 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 targeted 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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