



Department of Justice

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Perry County Man Convicted on Federal Charges of Kidnapping and Cocaine Trafficking

LONDON, Ky. - A Perry County man was convicted on Monday, by a federal jury sitting in London, of conspiracy to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine, possession of a firearm in furtherance of that conspiracy, possession of a firearm as a convicted felon, kidnapping, and conspiracy to commit a kidnapping.

The jury convicted 65-year-old Thomas Hamblin following a five-day trial, and approximately four hours of deliberations.

According to evidence at trial, Hamblin was working with others, including Bobby Sizemore, Robert Keith Caudill, and Doyle Back, to obtain kilogram quantities of cocaine, and to sell that cocaine to others in the Perry County area. Evidence further revealed that, after an attempted drug deal, Hamblin coordinated with others, including Luke Holbrook and Michael Rayburn, to kidnap and assault two victims in Tazewell, Tennessee. Specifically, Hamblin recruited Luke Holbrook into the plot and provided him with a firearm and ammunition. Holbrook, assisted by Rayburn and another individual, then held two victims at gun point, tied them up with duct tape, assaulted them with a baseball bat, and interrogated them, in an attempt to retaliate against them and recover Hamblin's money or drugs. Portions of this kidnapping and assault were recorded on a cell phone that was recovered from the scene. That same cell phone revealed that Hamblin was contacted in the middle of the assault and kidnapping.

Thomas Hamblin was indicted in July of 2020, following an investigation by the DEA, the Hazard Police Department, Operation UNITE, the Tazwell Tennessee Police Department, the Claiborne County Sheriff's Department, and the Kentucky State Police.

All of Hamblin's co-defendants have pled guilty. Holbrook and Rayburn pled guilty to kidnapping. Rayburn was sentenced to 135 months in prison and Holbrook awaits sentencing. Sizemore, Back, and Caudill have all pled guilty to drug charges and are awaiting sentencing.

Hamblin will appear for sentencing on October 26, 2021, and he faces from 10 years to life in prison. However, the Court must consider the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the applicable federal sentencing statutes before imposing a sentence.

Carlton S. Shier, IV, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; J. Todd Scott, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Louisville Field Division; Vic Brown Executive Director of AHIDTA; Minor Allen, Chief of the Hazard Police Department; Nancy Hale, President/CEO of Operation UNITE; Jeremy Meyers, Chief of the Tazewell Police Department; Bob Brooks, Sheriff of the Claiborne County Tennessee Sherriff's Department, and Commissioner Phillip "PJ" Burnett, Jr., Commissioner of the Kentucky State Police, jointly announced the convictions. The United States was represented in the case by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew H. Trimble.

This case was 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, Acting U.S. Attorney Shier coordinates PSN efforts in cooperation with various federal, state, and local law enforcement