



Department of Justice

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Floyd County Man Pleads Guilty to Armed Drug Trafficking

PIKEVILLE, Ky. – A Prestonsburg, Ky., man, James A. Newsome, 46, pleaded guilty on Wednesday, before U.S. District Judge Robert Wier, to distribution of methamphetamine and a mixture of heroin and fentanyl, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

According to Newsome's plea agreement, on October 20, 2020, he admitted to selling over six grams of methamphetamine and one gram of a fentanyl-laced heroin mixture, to a confidential informant, from his residence. During the transaction, Newsome removed a .45 caliber firearm, from under the pillow on his bed; he proceeded to remove the safety pin from the gun, to show the informant the gun; and he appeared to place a round in the chamber.

Newsome was indicted in August 2021.

Carlton S. Shier, IV, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Louisville Field Division; and Chief Randy Woods, Prestonsburg Police Department, jointly announced the guilty plea.

The investigation was conducted by the FBI and Prestonsburg Police Department. The United States was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicholas Rabold.

Newsome's sentencing date has yet to be scheduled. For the drug charge, he faces a maximum of 30 years in prison. For the firearm charge, he faces a minimum of five years, up to life, to run consecutively to the other charge. However, any sentence will be imposed by the Court, after its consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal sentencing statutes.

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, U.S. Attorney Shier coordinates PSN efforts in cooperation with various federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.

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