



Department of Justice

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EASTERN OREGON MAN SENTENCED TO NEARLY 20 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR TRAFFICKING SIXTY POUNDS OF METHAMPHETAMINE

PORTLAND, Ore.—Abel Lomas Murillo, 26, of Weston, Oregon, was sentenced today to 235 months in federal prison and five years' supervised release for conspiring to distribute methamphetamine.

Murillo previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute methamphetamine on April 15, 2019.

According to court documents, in November 2017, the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team (BENT), the Oregon State Police (OSP) and the FBI began investigating a drug trafficking organization led by Murillo.

Abel Murillo sourced drugs from his older brother and co-defendant Noel Murillo who lived in Vacaville, California in the Eastern District of California. The investigation revealed that as early as July 2017, Noel Murillo transported drugs from Vacaville to Klamath Fall, Oregon where a courier would then deliver them to his brother. Abel Murillo and his co-conspirators also made multiple trips to Medford, Oregon to pick up drugs and transport them back to Morrow and Umatilla Counties for distribution in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington.

In January 2018, an OSP trooper stopped one of the Murillo brothers' couriers, Luis Alberto Navarro, in a vehicle traveling near Klamath Falls en route to Umatilla County. A search of the vehicle revealed 11 concealed packages containing more than 8 kilograms of methamphetamine.

In early May 2018, as the investigation continued, Abel Murillo enlisted another courier, Noel Ponce Villegas, to drive methamphetamine from Medford to Boardman, Oregon. Investigators surveilled Murillo as he traveled from Umatilla County to a storage locker in Medford and loaded a trailer being pulled by his truck. Murillo paid Villegas to drive his truck and trailer while he followed to minimize his own risk. In the early morning hours of May 6, 2018, investigators from BENT, OSP and FBI stopped Murillo and Villegas as they drove near mile marker 102 on Interstate 84.

Investigators seized 42 packages of methamphetamine, 36 of which were concealed in a false bottom of a propane tank. The packages contained approximately 17.6 kilograms of methamphetamine. Later the same day, investigators executed a search warrant at Murillo's residence, seizing 29 firearms and body armor. Pursuant to a separate search warrants, another 10 pounds of methamphetamine and five firearms were found in a Medford storage locker Murillo had visited earlier in the weekend.

During sentencing, U.S. District Court Judge Michael H. Simon ordered Murillo to pay \$20,000 to satisfy a forfeiture money judgment.

On May 7, 2018, Navarro pleaded guilty to one count of possession with the intent to distribute methamphetamine. He will be sentenced on October 15, 2019.

On April 18, 2019, Villegas pleaded guilty to one count of possession with the intent to distribute methamphetamine. He will be sentenced on December 3, 2019.

Co-defendant Noel Murillo is charged with one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine. A three-day jury trial is scheduled for November 5, 2019.

This case was investigated by BENT, OSP and the FBI and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon.

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