



PRESS RELEASE

15 Individuals Arrested on Federal Drug Trafficking and Firearm Charges

Friday, December 21, 2018

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Hampshire

CONCORD - United States Attorney Scott W. Murray announced today that 15 individuals were arrested on federal drug trafficking and firearm offenses. The arrests are the culmination of a year-long investigation into drug trafficking in and around the Rochester, Farmington, Somersworth, and Dover areas of New Hampshire by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in coordination with federal, state and local authorities in New Hampshire and Maine. The following individuals were arrested and charged as follows:

- Thomas Blanchette, 42, Rochester, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl;
- Christopher Stearns, 46, Rochester, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl;
- Amy Patch, 37, Rochester, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl;
- Nicholas Barton, 34, Rochester, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute

40 grams or more of fentanyl;

- Randy Stevens, 28, Farmington, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl;
- Kyle Forest, 25, Rochester, NH-conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl;
- Derek Rand, 30, Farmington, NH, -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute, and to distribute, fentanyl;
- Sasha Rand, 33, Farmington, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and to distribute fentanyl;
- James Nesbitt, 42, Rochester, NH-conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute, and to distribute, fentanyl and methamphetamine;
- Haley Hansler, 32, Rochester, NH-conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and to distribute fentanyl and methamphetamine;
- William McKay, 45, Rochester, NH-conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and to distribute fentanyl and methamphetamine;
- Angel Wilson, 33, Rochester, NH –possession of fentanyl with the intent to distribute;
- Stephanie Joy, 42, Rochester, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl;
- Joshua George, 37, Somersworth, NH -conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute, and to distribute, fentanyl; and
- Dean Smoronk, 57, Farmington, NH –possession of a firearm by a prohibited person and possession of a stolen firearm.

Most of the defendants were arrested on Thursday, December 20, 2018, and appeared in court that day. Joshua George first appeared in federal court on November 9, 2018.

“This coordinated sweep serves notice once again of law enforcement’s determination to disrupt the sale of fentanyl, methamphetamine and other dangerous drugs in New Hampshire” said U.S. Attorney Murray. “Drug trafficking has caused grave damage in Strafford County and throughout our state. Accordingly, we will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to arrest and prosecute those responsible. In order to keep the public safe from violent crime, we will also aggressively target those who unlawfully possess firearms. These prosecutions are an example of how federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies can work together to keep the Granite State safe.”

“The arrests today reflect DEA’s strong commitment to bring to justice those who distribute these dangerous drugs to our citizens,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Brian D. Boyle. “As we all know, drug trafficking, along with the gun and physical violence that often accompanies it, ravages the very foundation of our families and communities. This investigation demonstrates the strength and continued commitment of our local, state and federal law enforcement partners.”

“The U.S. Postal Inspection Service, along with our federal and state law enforcement partners, are committed to providing the resources necessary to combat drug trafficking in our communities,” said U.S. Postal Inspection Service’s Inspector in Charge, Joseph W. Cronin of the Boston Division. “These arrests should send a clear message that drugs, firearms, and violence will not be tolerated. Fentanyl, and other highly addictive drugs, are destroying families across the country. U.S. Postal Inspection Service will continue to work diligently to rid the U.S. Mail of illegal drugs and their proceeds.

This investigation was the product of an investigation by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). The OCDETF program is a federal multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional task force that supplies supplemental federal funding to federal and state agencies involved in the identification, investigation and prosecution of major drug trafficking organizations.

These cases were investigated by the DEA’s Tactical Diversion Squad; the New Hampshire State Police; the United States Postal Inspection Service; the United States Marshals Service; the Strafford County Drug Task Force; the Maine State Police; and the Dover (NH) Police Department. The cases are being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jennifer Cole Davis and Anna Dronzek.

The charges are allegations. The defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until

proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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DRUG TRAFFICKING

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