

PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Man Sentenced to 70 Months For Fentanyl Conspiracy and Wire Fraud

Friday, December 15, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Columbia

Defendant Trafficked in Narcotics; Used Stolen PII to Apply for Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars in Unemployment Insurance Benefits

WASHINGTON – Tyronn Waters, 32, of Silver Spring, Maryland, was sentenced today to 70 months in prison for his role in a drug trafficking operation in the metropolitan region, announced U.S. Attorney Graves; Acting Special Agent in Charge David Geist, of the FBI Washington Field Office's Criminal and Cyber Division; and Special Agent in Charge Troy W. Springer of the National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor - Office of Inspector General.

Waters pleaded guilty on July 13, 2023, in U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia to one count of conspiracy to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

According to the government's evidence, law enforcement launched an investigation in August 2021 into a suspected drug trafficking ring that was running a fentanyl pill pressing operation in the District and Maryland. According to court documents, Waters admitted he played a part in the ring, and conspired to possess with intent to distribute various narcotics. Those narcotics included counterfeit Oxycodone pills containing fentanyl, produced using the ring's three pill presses that pressed fentanyl mixes into what appeared to be genuine prescription pills. Waters admitted he purchased wholesale quantities of the counterfeit prescription pills and redistributed them for profit. Waters also admitted to possessing a firearm in connection with the offense.

On March 29, 2022, the FBI executed a search warrant at an apartment on the 1300 block of 4th St. SE, a stash house used by the conspiracy to house its pill pressing operation. During the search, law enforcement seized baggies of pills and loose powder, together amounting to more than 516 pills and more than 76 grams of a mixture and substance containing fentanyl.

Waters also was sentenced in connection with a guilty plea to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Waters and his co-conspirators obtained stolen personal identifiable information (PII) from numerous unwitting victims and used this PII to apply for unemployment insurance benefits in victim names from Maryland, North Carolina, California, and elsewhere. Waters and his co-conspirators used the unemployment insurance benefits to obtain pre-loaded debit cards used to make purchases throughout the District and Maryland. At times they wore masks and wigs to make cash withdrawals from the accounts of victims at ATMs throughout the region. Waters admitted he is accountable for losses of more than \$250,000 but less than \$550,000,

U.S. District Court Judge Amit P. Mehta ordered Waters to serve three years of supervised release after completing his prison sentence and to forfeit \$100,000.

In announcing the sentencing, U.S. Attorney Graves, Special Agent in Charge Geist, Special Agent in Charge Springer, and Chief Smith commended the work of those who investigated the case from the Montgomery County Police Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the FBI, and the Department of Labor's Office of the Inspector General.

They also acknowledged the efforts of those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Rosenberg who investigated and prosecuted the case along with former Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sarah Rasalam and Marnee Rand.

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