



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland*

Erek L. Barron
United States Attorney

Marcia A. Lubin
Public Affairs Specialist

36 South Charles Street
4th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Marcia.Murphy@usdoj.gov

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Contact MARCIA LUBIN
at (410) 209-4854

HARFORD COUNTY MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN A DRUG DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY

Defendant, Who was Previously Convicted of Drug Trafficking, and a Co-Conspirator Were Convicted After an Eight-Day Federal Trial

Baltimore, Maryland – U.S. District Judge George L. Russell, III sentenced Che Jaron Durbin, age 44, of Aberdeen, Maryland, on December 19, 2022, to 20 years in federal prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine and for two counts of possession with intent to distribute cocaine, in connection with his participation in a drug trafficking organization distributing cocaine and crack cocaine in Harford County, Maryland.

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erek L. Barron; Harford County State's Attorney Albert J. Peisinger, Jr.; Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget of the Drug Enforcement Administration; Postal Inspector in Charge Damon E. Wood of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service - Washington Division; Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler of the Harford County Sheriff's Office; and the Harford County Drug Task Force, a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program, comprised of members of the Harford County Sheriff's Office, the Aberdeen Police Department, the Bel Air Police Department, and the Havre de Grace Police Department.

According to evidence presented at the eight-day trial, in May 2019, members of the Harford County Drug Task Force were investigating Durbin, who was suspected of drug trafficking in the Harford County area. Witnesses testified that on May 17, 2019, a U.S. Postal Inspector notified detectives that a suspicious package was en route to Durbin's mother's apartment in Aberdeen, Maryland. Detectives watched as a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier delivered the parcel to Durbin, who took it into the apartment. A short time later, a woman, later identified as co-defendant Jameka Cara Thompson, left the apartment with the parcel and drove to her home. Law enforcement detained Thompson and obtained a search warrant for her vehicle. The parcel was found to contain one kilogram of compressed cocaine. Further investigation revealed that co-defendant Jack Anderson from Tucson, Arizona was the sender of the package.

On January 22, 2020, law enforcement learned from U.S. Postal Inspectors that Durbin sent a parcel from Havre de Grace, Maryland, addressed to Anderson in Tucson, Arizona. A search warrant was obtained for the parcel after a K9 gave a positive alert. The parcel contained \$82,300 in cash inside a wireless headphones box.

In February 2020, as part of the investigation, law enforcement intercepted Durbin's communications, as well as those of Anderson, co-defendant Terrell Walton, and other co-defendants to whom Durbin supplied cocaine and crack cocaine. The evidence at trial demonstrated that Walton obtained cocaine from Durbin, which Walton then sold to a network of individuals in Harford County. Intercepted communications between Durbin and Walton included discussions regarding the amounts of drugs and the price, often using coded language.

According to trial testimony, in May 2020, law enforcement surveilled Durbin meeting with Anderson at a Tucson, Arizona hotel. Soon after the meeting, Durbin picked Thompson up at the Tucson Airport and drove her back to his hotel room. Durbin flew back to Maryland the next day and Thompson ultimately obtained a bulk supply of cocaine from Anderson on Durbin's behalf. Thompson drove cross-country from Arizona to Harford County, where she was arrested on May 12, 2020. Law enforcement searched her vehicle, seizing 1.4 kilograms of cocaine. Durbin was also arrested. According to trial testimony, over the course of the conspiracy Thompson made at least eight similar trips on Durbin's behalf, transporting almost 40 kilograms of cocaine to Maryland for Durbin to distribute.

Co-defendant Terrell Darnell Walton, age 36, of Delaware, was also convicted at trial for the drug conspiracy and was sentenced on September 23, 2022, to 13 years in federal prison. Co-defendant Jack Anderson IV, age 46, of Tucson, Arizona, was sentenced to 126 months in federal prison in December 2021, after Anderson entered a guilty plea to conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine. Co-defendants Jameka Cara Thompson, age 42, of Abingdon, Maryland, was sentenced to 33 months in federal prison; Gerrick Devlon Jackson, age 40 of Havre de Grace, Maryland, was sentenced to 72 months in federal prison; and Michael Ronnell Wells, age 38, of Forest Hill, Maryland, was sentenced to 71 months in federal prison, for their roles in the conspiracy.

United States Attorney Erek L. Barron commended the Harford County State's Attorney's Office, the DEA, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Harford County Sheriff's Office, and the Harford County Drug Task Force for their work in the investigation. Mr. Barron thanked Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Romano, who prosecuted the case.

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