



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Billy J. Williams
District of Oregon

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THURSDAY, DEC. 17, 2020

WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/OR

CONTACT: KEVIN SONOFF

PHONE: (503) 727-1185

KEVIN.SONOFF@USDOJ.GOV

MADRAS METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

EUGENE, Ore.—Ronald Wayne Thrasher, 50, a prolific drug dealer from Madras, Oregon with a decades-long criminal history, was sentenced today to 25 years in federal prison followed by five years’ supervised release, announced U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams.

On August 8, 2019, Thrasher, whose previous convictions include drug manufacturing and distribution, burglary, and illegal firearm possession, was found guilty of conspiring to distribute controlled substances and possessing with intent to distribute methamphetamine by a federal jury in Eugene.

“Ronald Thrasher is a dangerous criminal whose drug dealing threatened communities throughout Central Oregon. Despite several previous convictions and significant prison sentences, Thrasher repeatedly returned to drug trafficking to provide income for himself, supply his own drug addiction, and bolster his status among rivals,” said U.S. Attorney Williams. “The significant sentence imposed today cuts off a major source of methamphetamine supply in Central Oregon, aiding our collective effort to reverse the state’s addiction crisis.”

“DEA is committed to working with our state, local and federal partners at curbing the violence in our communities,” said DEA Special Agent in Charge Frank Tarentino. He further added, “This sentence is an important step in our joint mission to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy violent drug trafficking organizations who threaten the very communities we aim to protect.”

“Mr. Thrasher’s sentence is fitting for the illegal actions he has taken,” said ATF Seattle Special Agent in Charge Jonathan T. McPherson. “ATF will always work to bring to justice those who cause harm in their communities.”

Thrasher was convicted alongside his supplier, Russell Marvin Jones, 54, of Gresham, Oregon. Both men conspired with one another and others to traffic methamphetamine from Southern California to Central Oregon and the Portland, Oregon Metropolitan Area for distribution. For his role in the scheme, Jones was sentenced to 200 months in prison and five years’ supervised release. [Nine other co-defendants](#) have pleaded guilty to conspiring with Thrasher.

According to court documents and testimony produced at trial, in the spring of 2016, Thrasher became acquainted with multiple co-defendants who were engaged in trafficking

methamphetamine from Santee and San Diego, California, and Portland for resale in Central Oregon. Thrasher used these connections to establish a source of supply for his own methamphetamine use and distribution.

In early 2017, after his primary supplier was arrested in Redmond, Oregon, an associate introduced Thrasher to Jones, a methamphetamine manufacturer and dealer in the Portland area. On or about February 17, 2017, Thrasher traveled to Portland with his associates to meet Jones and Jones sold Thrasher several pounds of methamphetamine. On March 20, 2017, after several more deals, Jones sold Thrasher a stolen firearm.

By April 2017, Thrasher was distributing methamphetamine via multiple associates throughout Central Oregon. On April 9, 2017, he was introduced to new California-based methamphetamine suppliers. Two weeks later, Thrasher and an associate drove to Santee to meet with his new suppliers. During this meeting, Thrasher purchased approximately 13 pounds of methamphetamine.

In May 2017, a Central Oregon Drug Enforcement (CODE) team investigation identified Thrasher as a high-volume methamphetamine supplier and distributor. On May 29, 2017, CODE detectives assisted by a U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent arrested Thrasher and seized approximately 16 pounds of methamphetamine, \$16,000 in cash, drug sale records and the stolen firearm from his residence in Madras.

This case was investigated by CODE, DEA, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and the Oregon State Police. It was prosecuted Frank R. Papagni Jr. and Judi Harper, Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the District of Oregon, with the assistance of the Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes County District Attorney's Offices.

###