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United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Lane County Man Who Negotiated Guns-for-Drugs Trade Sentenced to Federal Prison

EUGENE, Ore.—A Lane County, Oregon man who negotiated the trade of methamphetamine for 17 firearms was sentenced to federal prison today.

Mark Villanueva, 38, was sentenced to 120 months in federal prison and five years' supervised release.

According to court documents, in August 2020, special agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) obtained information that Villanueva was actively involved in distributing illegal narcotics, primarily methamphetamine, in and around Lane County, Oregon, and illegally possessed firearms as a convicted felon. In October and November of 2020, Villanueva sold methamphetamine to an undercover law enforcement officer on five separate occasions. During the fifth transaction, Villanueva began discussing his interest in buying or selling ammunition and firearms.

In December 2020 and continuing into January 2021, Villanueva negotiated the trade of multiple firearms for a large quantity of methamphetamine with his Los Angeles-based source of supply. However, on January 11, 2021, before Villanueva could complete the transaction, he was arrested in Florence, Oregon on an outstanding state arrest warrant. Despite his arrest, the guns-for-drugs trade moved forward and was completed on January 13, 2021, the same day Villanueva was released from state custody. Following his release was custody, Villanueva confirmed that 17 firearms had been traded for three pounds of methamphetamine with his source of supply in Los Angeles.

On January 13, 2021, Villanueva was charged by criminal complaint with distributing methamphetamine. Later, on May 20, 2021, a federal grand jury in Eugene returned an indictment charging Villanueva and three associates, including his then-wife and Los Angeles-based source of supply, with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine, conspiracy to possess a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

On February 16, 2023, Villanueva pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine.

This case was investigated by ATF with assistance from Eugene Police Department. It was prosecuted by Adam E. Delph, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

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