

DOJ: Armed drug dealer sentenced to 8 years in federal prison

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MADISON, WIS. — – Scott C. Blader, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Maurice Johnson, Jr., 29, Madison, Wisconsin, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge James D. Peterson to eight years in federal prison, followed by a three-year term of supervised release, for possessing heroin with intent to distribute it and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Johnson pleaded guilty to these charges on December 6, 2017.

Johnson was arrested in Madison on June 26, 2017, because a vehicle he was operating had been reported stolen. Johnson had 2.9 grams of heroin, laced with fentanyl, in a pants pocket. In another pocket, he had \$790. In the center console of the car, Johnson had a loaded pistol and two cell phones. Johnson admitted that he had been selling heroin in Madison for approximately 10 years, and that he had purchased the firearm from another drug dealer because he needed it for protection.

In choosing an eight year sentence, Judge Peterson relied on the following aggravating factors: 1) Johnson had never been gainfully employed and by his own admission, selling heroin was his career; 2) it was problematic that Johnson engaged in an activity that required a heightened need for protection, and firearms pose a danger to the community; and 3) Johnson was on state probation when he was arrested.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program that has been historically successful in bringing together all levels of law enforcement to reduce violent crime and make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has made turning the tide of rising violent crime in America a top priority. In October 2017, as part of a [series of actions](#) to address this crime trend, Attorney General Sessions announced the reinvigoration of PSN and directed all U.S. Attorney's Offices to develop a district crime reduction strategy that incorporates the lessons learned since PSN launched in 2001.

The charges against Johnson are the result of an investigation by the Madison Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution of this case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Rita M. Rumbelow and Corey Stephan.