

U.S. Dept. of Justice: Sentences Minnesota man to 10 years for leadership role in drug conspiracy

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MADISON, WIS. – Timothy M. O’Shea, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that David Stone III, 29, St. Paul, Minnesota was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge William M. Conley to 10 years in federal prison for his leadership role in a heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine conspiracy. Stone pleaded guilty on November 17, 2021 to conspiring to distribute heroin and fentanyl.

David Stone was distributing heroin and methamphetamine in Northwestern Wisconsin in 2019 and 2020. In February 2020, he was incarcerated on an unrelated matter. Investigators listened to over 3,000 hours of phone calls Stone made from jail and learned that he was orchestrating a large-scale drug-trafficking operation while in custody.

Stone called his source in Minnesota to arrange for the sale of the drugs and then called his co-conspirators in Wisconsin to arrange for the pickup. Stone was very specific in the calls to his co-conspirators, directing them when to leave Wisconsin, how much to pay for the drugs, how to break them down into smaller quantities, and where to redistribute them. Stone controlled every aspect of the operation and was considered the leader for purposes of sentencing. Stone’s relevant conduct includes approximately 270 grams of methamphetamine and 75 grams of fentanyl.

Stone has an extensive criminal history that is largely drug and alcohol related, but with some crimes involving violence and weapons. Judge Conley remarked that the 10-year sentence was appropriate given Stone's significant criminal history, flippant attitude towards supervision, and the scale of the drug-trafficking operation.

Stone is the second of the conspiracy to be sentenced. Marcie Leoso was sentenced on January 26, 2021 to 5 years in prison. The three other co-conspirators have pleaded guilty to federal charges. Chai Vang is to be sentenced by Judge Conley on April 26, Aaron Guski on April 28, and Mala Persaud on May 4.

The charges against David Stone III were the result of an investigation conducted by the Wisconsin Department of Justice Division of Criminal Investigation; Ashland Police Department, Washburn Police Department, Ashland County Sheriff's Office; Drug Enforcement Administration; Red Cliff Police Department; and Wisconsin State Patrol. The prosecution of the cases has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane Schlipper.