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**Second Spokane Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Running a  
Commercial Pill Press Operation in the Hillyard Area**

Spokane, Washington – First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano announced that United States District Judge Thomas O. Rice has sentenced Nicholas Adams, 37, of Spokane, Washington to a 20 year term of incarceration, to be followed by 10 years of court supervision upon his release stemming from his role in running a commercial pill press operation out of his residence in the Hillyard neighborhood of Spokane

According to court documents and information discussed during the sentencing hearing, Adams and his co-defendant Timothy Maddox obtained a commercial pill press via the mail from China and set up a 'pill press operation' in the basement of Adams' residence, mixing powder fentanyl and cutting agents to make their own fentanyl pills for bulk distribution into the community.

Search warrants were executed at multiple locations in November 2023 and yield a massive amount of fentanyl powder, cutting agents, pill press parts, and multiple firearms along with an operational commercial pill press (below). Given the extremely hazardous conditions and contamination of nearly every flat surface created by operating a pill lab, the Department of Ecology assisted in the execution of the search warrant at Adams' residence.

According to calculations by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the amount of fentanyl powder Maddox and Adams had on hand to produce pills was easily enough to make over 2,000,000 fentanyl pills containing a *lethal* dose. Put another way, the amount of fentanyl powder they had on hand to make these illicit pills could kill the entire population of Spokane County almost 4 times over.

In addition to their fentanyl pill production, Maddox and Adams possessed large quantities of methamphetamine, along with heroin, cocaine, MDMA, and marijuana. They each also armed with multiple loaded firearms in their respective residences, which included loaded (and chambered) handguns, loaded modified shotguns, and AK-type rifles. In Maddox's residence, he also had a loaded (with a round chambered) firearm with a "Glock switch" making it a fully automatic machine gun, with a loaded large drum magazine as well as three sets of body armor.

Notably, Adams engaged in this conduct after being repeatedly involved in the criminal justice system. Since 2012, he has repeatedly perpetrated acts of violence against others and then disregarded court orders attempting to keep his victims safe from him. His history also shows a dedication to his controlled substance abuse despite multiple court interventions. In fact,

when he was arrested for this offense, he was initially released from custody to attend inpatient drug treatment. However, he continued to use drugs and was returned to custody.

“Stopping the production and flow of fentanyl into our communities is one of the most challenging crises we face as law enforcement. This is a matter of importance as it will protect public health. This investigation and prosecution provide a tremendous example of the collaborative approach we take to fighting this serious and ever-increasing threat to our communities,” said First Assistant Serrano. “The volume of fentanyl that this investigation took of the street is truly staggering. I cannot overstate the impact our team made here, by identifying a repeat criminal who was manufacturing vast quantities of this deadly drug while heavily armed. Removing him for decades will protect this community in ways seen and unseen. We want the public to know that these threats exist and that our team is working tirelessly to combat them wherever and whenever they appear.”

“This 20-year sentence advances DEA’s unwavering commitment to a Fentanyl Free America,” said Robert A. Saccone, Special Agent in Charge, DEA Seattle Field Division. “By possessing massive amounts of fentanyl powder and operating a commercial pill press capable of producing more than two million potentially lethal fentanyl pills, the defendant was directly placing lives in Spokane County at risk. Fentanyl Free America is our nationwide effort to disrupt the fentanyl supply chain, reduce its availability, and save American lives through relentless enforcement, education, increased public awareness, and strong strategic partnerships. Together, we will continue working to Make America Fentanyl Free.”

“HSI Seattle and its partners have removed a major public safety threat by securing decades-long sentences for both defendants in one of Eastern Washington’s largest fentanyl pill manufacturing cases,” said HSI Seattle Acting Special Agent in Charge April Miller. “With both Adams and his co-conspirator Maddox now behind bars, HSI has safeguarded the community and reaffirmed its commitment to protecting the American people. By shutting down their makeshift lab in a residential community, HSI helped eliminate an operation capable of producing over two million deadly pills—saving countless lives and protecting families from harm.”

“I am very pleased with news of the successful investigation, prosecution, and conviction of the people in this case.” Said Sheriff Nowels. “Those convicted clearly presented a danger to our entire region as they made the decision to flood our community with Fentanyl and other lethal drugs. This case highlights the importance of unwavering relationships and cooperation between local law enforcement and all our federal partners to bring justice and safety to Spokane and surrounding communities.”



This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, Homeland Security Investigations, the Regional Anti-Violence Enforcement & Narcotics (RAVEN) Task Force, and the Spokane Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Caitlin Baunsgard.

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