



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney
Eastern District of Washington

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**DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO 240 MONTHS FOR LARGE-SCALE FENTANYL
TRAFFICKING OPERATION**

Spokane, Washington — First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano announced that on May 6, 2026, United States District Court Judge Thomas Rice sentenced Clinton Paul Patterson, age 42 to 240 months (20 years) in prison to be followed by ten years of supervised release for his role in a significant fentanyl trafficking operation that distributed tens of thousands of pills across Eastern Washington.

The sentence follows an extensive investigation conducted by the Spokane Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration that uncovered a sophisticated drug distribution network operating between Seattle and Spokane, with meetings frequently arranged in Ritzville, Washington. According to court documents and information revealed during the sentencing hearing, beginning in December 2023, approximately 5,475 fentanyl pills (weighing over 480 grams), along with cocaine, firearms, and multiple cell phones were seized from the execution of a residential search warrant. Law enforcement, through surveillance footage, determined that location was utilized for the distribution of fentanyl in Spokane. Text message evidence revealed that Patterson —identified through phone records and financial transactions—was the source of supply for that fentanyl being trafficked out of this residence. The messages showed Patterson directed drug distribution activities, coordinated meeting locations, and arranged payments through Cash App and cash exchanges. Records confirmed multiple payments totaling thousands of dollars corresponding to drug transactions.

Patterson was arrested on October 21, 2024, in Pasco, Washington. Subsequent searches of his residence and vehicle resulted in the seizure of additional narcotics, including:

- Approximately 1,449 grams of fentanyl recovered from a toilet, where Patterson had attempted to destroy evidence when law enforcement knocked and announced their presence at his door.
- 189 grams of fentanyl pills found in his vehicle.
- Cocaine and MDMA located within his residence.

In issuing this sentence, Judge Rice considered Patterson's extensive criminal history, which included prior convictions for attempted second-degree murder and a previous federal drug trafficking offense. Notably, Patterson had previously received a reduced federal sentence for fentanyl distribution but continued engaging in similar criminal conduct upon release, resulting in the this conviction. Additionally, while in custody, Patterson made threats against his own legal counsel and a federal prosecutor, further raising concerns about public safety and deterrence.

First Assistant United States Attorney Pete Serrano said, "This sentence was well deserved in this case given the huge quantity of deadly fentanyl involved and Patterson's pattern of violent and drug-related criminal conduct. This case underscores the ongoing efforts of federal and local law enforcement to combat the distribution of fentanyl, a highly dangerous and often deadly substance contributing to the opioid crisis nationwide."

"This 20-year sentence sends a clear message: those who profit from poisoning our communities with fentanyl will be held accountable," said Robert A. Saccone, Special Agent in Charge, DEA Seattle Field Division. "Through Fentanyl Free America, DEA is relentlessly targeting the individuals and networks responsible for distributing this deadly drug. With strong enforcement, intelligence-driven investigations, and strategic partnerships, we are working every day to disrupt the fentanyl supply chain and save American lives."

Sergeant Julian Covella of the RAVEN Task Force said, "This sentence is reflective of the many hours of hard work and dedication shown by the lead investigator in this case and the RAVEN Task Force members as a whole. The RAVEN Task Force is proud of the collaborative work between our local and federal partners as we continue to battle the fentanyl epidemic affecting our community."

For additional information, please contact the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington.

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