THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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Salem Gang Member Sentenced to 10 Years in Federal Prison for Trafficking Firearms and Controlled Substances

PORTLAND, Ore.— A Salem man associated with the Varrio Catorce Norteño street gang was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison today for trafficking firearms and controlled substances, United States Attorney Scott E. Bradford announced.

Christopher Hermens, 29, was sentenced to 120 months in federal prison and three years of supervised release after pleading guilty to transferring firearms to another person while having reasonable cause to believe the recipient intended to use, carry, or possess the firearms in connection with felony offenses.

According to court documents, in July 2023, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) began investigating members of the Varrio Catorce Norteño gang in the Salem area. During the investigation, an undercover ATF agent conducted a series of controlled purchases of firearms and controlled substances from Hermens and his associates.

Between January and February 2025, Hermens participated in multiple transactions involving firearms, cocaine, marijuana, and fentanyl. During these meetings, Hermens coordinated firearm sales, supplied controlled substances, connected undercover agents with fentanyl suppliers, and discussed obtaining additional firearms, including unserialized "ghost guns."

On Jan. 23, 2025, Hermens and a co-conspirator sold five firearms and approximately one ounce of cocaine to an undercover agent. During the transaction, Hermens discussed future firearm sales and his ability to obtain additional weapons.

On Feb. 6, 2025, Hermens facilitated the sale of two firearms, approximately two pounds of marijuana, and approximately 32 grams of fentanyl. During the same transaction, Hermens arranged for an additional fentanyl sale through a drug supplier.

Later that month, on Feb. 27, 2025, Hermens coordinated a transaction in which an undercover agent purchased approximately 122 grams of fentanyl from one of Hermens's associates.

On July 22, 2025, law enforcement executed a search warrant at Hermens's residence and recovered 19 firearms, including a rifle found beneath his bed and a pistol located in a neighboring bedroom. Investigators also recovered additional firearms and firearm components from a safe in the residence.

“The defendant repeatedly trafficked firearms and dangerous controlled substances, including fentanyl, while leveraging gang ties and criminal associates to expand his illegal activities,” said **Scott E. Bradford, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon**. “Individuals who profit from the distribution of illegal firearms and deadly narcotics pose a serious threat to public safety. This sentence holds the defendant accountable for his conduct and reflects our commitment to disrupting the criminal networks that endanger Oregon communities.”

As part of his plea agreement, Hermens agreed to forfeit firearms and other property connected to his criminal conduct.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Nicole M. Bockelman prosecuted the case.

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