

# Judges Sentences St. Louis Man for Murder, Witness Tampering and Drug Charges

July 6 2021 1:46 PM



ST. LOUIS – United States District Judge Henry E. Autrey sentenced Maurice Woodson to 276 months in prison today. The 34-year-old St. Louis, Missouri resident pleaded guilty, in February, to one count of conspiracy to distribute cocaine, one count of discharging a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime resulting in death and one count of witness tampering.

Woodson was a member of a large-scale and long-term cocaine trafficking conspiracy between 2012 and 2016. Woodson and others bought large quantities of cocaine from convicted drug trafficker Adrian Lemons and Lemons' associates in the St. Louis area. The investigation into Woodson and his associates developed evidence of a well-defined distribution network with a direct Mexican source of supply for cocaine. During the

course of the investigation, agents seized more than 70 kilograms of cocaine and well over one million dollars, among other things.

In furtherance of the drug trafficking conspiracy, Woodson was recruited to kill a person. Woodson agreed to commit the murder. On December 5, 2013, Woodson intentionally shot and killed the person as that person tried to enter his vehicle in the 3500 block of Kossuth. Woodson received both drugs and money as compensation for the murder. Similarly, Woodson was recruited to kill another victim in furtherance of the cocaine trafficking conspiracy. On November 28, 2014, Woodson lured the other person to a meeting. When the person arrived in the 900 block of Harlan, Woodson intentionally shot and killed him. He died as a result of his gunshot wounds. Two others who accompanied the victim were also shot and injured.

In January 2016, Woodson was indicted in federal court for his roles in the drug conspiracy and December 2013 murder. Woodson was ordered detained by a magistrate judge pending trial. While detained in a local holding facility, Woodson initiated a murder-for-hire scheme. As part of the scheme, Woodson recruited an individual to murder a potential witness to the December 2013 murder committed by Woodson. Utilizing female companions, Woodson arranged meetings with and payments to the individual recruited to murder the potential witness. Unbeknownst to Woodson, the individual recruited by Woodson to commit the murder-for-hire was an undercover law enforcement official.

“The purchase of a firearm intended for someone else, is straw purchasing and it is illegal. Doing so circumvents background checks and record keeping requirements that are intended to keep the public safe and impede access to firearms by prohibited and often violent criminals,” said Frederic Winston, Special Agent-in-Charge for the ATF St. Louis Division. “Firearms trafficking is not a victimless crime; It is illegal and puts firearms in the hands of said prohibited and violent criminals. These investigation are a priority for ATF in our mission of reducing violent gun crime. “

Homeland Security Investigations, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department; Kennett Police Department, United States Marshals Service, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives investigated the case.