

# Man Gets 30 Years for Attempting To Traffic 40 Pounds of Meth In Metro East

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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EAST ST. LOUIS – A Fort Smith, Ark., man - Christopher Palmer - has pleaded guilty for trafficking about 40 pounds of methamphetamine through the Metro East. A Southern Illinois District Judge has sentenced the Arkansas man to 360 months' imprisonment.

Christopher Palmer, 40, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute meth, one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and one count of felon in possession of a firearm on June 29, 2023. Palmer was sentenced to 300 months for count one, a 60-month mandatory consecutive sentence for count two, and a 120-month sentence to run concurrent to count one.

“As a repeat criminal offender, the defendant chose to transport drugs in bulk for distribution and unlawfully possess a firearm knowing the consequences,” said U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. “I appreciate our partnership with the DEA to apprehend offenders guilty of violent and drug-related crimes.”

According to court documents, two DEA highway interdiction officers pulled Palmer over as he was driving a rental car on the Illinois State Route 143 exit ramp off Interstate 70 near Marine in May 2022. Agents asked Palmer to exit the vehicle, and he complied. Once outside the vehicle, he then tried to re-enter the car and move the gearshift into drive to evade the police.

Following Palmer’s attempt to flee the traffic stop, the officers detained him and conducted an open-air canine sniff of the vehicle. The canine indicated to the presence of a narcotic odor thus initiating a probable cause search.

In the trunk of Palmer’s rental vehicle, officers located a duffel bag stuffed with 40 bags holding approximately one pound each of crystal meth, totaling more than 17 kilograms of actual meth.

“The scourge of illicit drugs entering our communities, including methamphetamine, is alarming and tragic,” said Assistant Special Agent in Charge Joseph Dixon, head of DEA enforcement operations in southern Illinois. “This individual’s reckless actions and reliance on weapons to support his drug activities was equally damaging to our citizens. This violence deprived communities of a fundamental sense of security in their own homes and neighborhoods. DEA is committed to ensuring the most violent drug offenders are removed from our streets.”

In the car’s center console, DEA officers located a loaded Glock 43 semi-automatic pistol. Palmer is unable to legally possess firearms due to prior felony convictions.

Under federal sentencing guidelines, Palmer qualified as a “career offender” for previous drug trafficking convictions. Career offenders are eligible for longer terms of federal imprisonment. Following imprisonment, Palmer will serve five years of supervised release.

DEA led the investigation, and Assistant U.S. Attorney John Trippi prosecuted the case.