



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
Central District of Illinois

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**Danville Man Sentenced to Ten Years in Prison for
Drug Trafficking and the Unlawful Use of Firearms**

URBANA, Ill. – A Danville, Illinois, man, Deandre Smith, 35, was sentenced on March 8, 2022, to a combined term of 120 months in the Bureau of Prisons for convictions including distribution of fentanyl, distribution of methamphetamine, possession of fentanyl with the intent to distribute, carrying a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime, and possession of a firearm by a felon.

A grand jury in the Central District of Illinois returned an indictment charging Smith with aforementioned offenses in August 2020. Smith pled guilty to four of the counts in June 2021, but elected to go to trial on the charge that he carried a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

During the two-day jury trial in September 2021, the United States presented evidence of Smith's involvement in drug trafficking. Following two drug purchases from Smith by a confidential source, law enforcement arrested Smith at Dale's Tavern in Danville on February 3, 2020. During the arrest, officers found 23 packages of fentanyl in one of Smith's jacket pockets, and a digital scale and a loaded Smith & Wesson handgun in the other pocket. Smith insisted at the time that he was selling heroin, but later testing showed he was selling the far more potent fentanyl. Following a short deliberation, a jury convicted Smith of carrying a firearm during and in relation to his fentanyl trafficking crime.

At the sentencing, U.S. District Judge Michael M. Mihm agreed with the jury that Smith was carrying a gun to further his drug trade. Judge Mihm sentenced Smith to concurrent 60-month terms of imprisonment on the four counts involving drug trafficking and possession of a firearm by a felon and a consecutive 60-month term of imprisonment for carrying a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

The Vermilion Metropolitan Enforcement Group investigated the case with assistance from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Illinois State Police; Danville Police Department; and Vermilion County Sheriff's Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bryan Freres and William Lynch represented the government in the prosecution, in coordination with Vermilion County State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy.