

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)
 v.)
) No. 1:24-cr-10115-NMG
 DEONDRE BLANDING,)
)
 Defendant)

GOVERNMENT’S SENTENCING MEMORANDUM

With an alarming disregard for the danger he posed to others, on October 8, 2023, the defendant, Deondre Blanding, a Heath Street Gang member/associate and a marijuana dealer for the Gang, arranged to buy three pounds of marijuana and arrived at the meeting site for the deal armed with a firearm. The arranged drug deal culminated in a shootout in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Thankfully, no one was injured. The parties’ jointly-recommended sentence of 60 months of imprisonment – the statutory mandatory minimum term of imprisonment and at the low end of the defendant’s guideline sentence – adequately reflects the seriousness of the offense and the need for deterrence and punishment and is sufficient but not greater than necessary to achieve the goals of sentencing.

I. Factual Background

During an ongoing investigation of the Heath Street Gang, the defendant was identified as a Heath Street member/associate and a marijuana dealer for the Gang, including based on recovered electronic communications that involved the defendant distributing significant, pound-quantity amounts of marijuana. Presentence Report (“PSR”) ¶¶ 8-9.

On October 8, 2023, the defendant arranged to buy three pounds – a distributable amount – of marijuana in a residential neighborhood in Randolph, Massachusetts, and went to the deal

armed with a firearm. *Id.* ¶ 10. That deal culminated in an exchange of gunfire involving the defendant and two other individuals. *Id.* ¶¶ 10-15.

Specifically, at approximately 3:30 p.m. that day, Randolph Police received multiple 911 calls for a shooting in the area of Bonnie Lane and Gallagher Drive in Randolph. *Id.* ¶ 11. Witnesses reported that two males in a Durango (later identified per the investigation as Gelson Rodrigues and Carlos Amado)¹ and a third individual in a yard (later identified per the investigation as the defendant) were shooting at each other. *Id.* Recovered security camera footage shows the driver of the Durango stop, exit the car, and shoot; audio captures other shots being fired, consistent with the defendant returning fire from the yard. *Id.*

A group of 9mm shell casings was recovered in the street where the Durango had been located during the shooting. *Id.* ¶ 13. The Durango was subsequently located in a garage of a residence associated with Rodrigues with ballistic damage to it, consistent with having been shot at by the defendant. *Id.* Two firearms were recovered near the Durango. *Id.*

In the yard, investigators recovered another group of 9mm shell casings and a cell phone in the flight path of the third individual (the defendant). *Id.* Investigators searched the phone and determined it was the defendant's. *Id.* The defendant's phone contained electronic communications between the defendant and an individual consistent with the defendant arranging to buy three pounds of marijuana in Randolph. *Id.* ¶ 14. That individual stated he would have someone deliver the drugs to the defendant. *Id.* Thereafter, the defendant's phone had communications with a phone number identified per the investigation as being used by

¹ Rodrigues and Amado were arrested and charged in the state. Rodrigues was federally charged and that case is pending. *See* 1:24-cr-10231-ADB.

Rodrigues in which they discussed meeting logistics. *Id.* ¶ 15. These communications occurred up until approximately 18 minutes before the shooting. *Id.*

On February 14, 2024, the defendant was arrested for the instant offense. On May 6, 2024, the defendant entered a plea of guilty pursuant to a Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11(c)(1)(C) plea agreement in which the parties agreed to a sentence of incarceration of 60 months; a fine within the Guidelines sentencing range as calculated by the Court; 48 months of supervised release; a \$100 mandatory special assessment; and forfeiture. ECF Dkt. No. 18 (“Plea Agmt”); *see also* ECF Dkt. No. 23 (Electronic Clerk Notes for Rule 11 Hearing).

II. Advisory Sentencing Guidelines

As set forth in the final Presentence Report and as agreed to by the parties, the defendant’s Sentencing Guidelines range is a term of imprisonment of 5 years to life. *See* PSR ¶ 21; Plea Agmt. ¶ 4.

III. Sentencing Factors

Consideration of the 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) factors demonstrates that a sentence of 60 months’ imprisonment is sufficient, but not greater than necessary, to accomplish the goals of sentencing.

a. Nature and Circumstances of the Offense

The dangerous nature and circumstances of the defendant’s offense cannot be overstated. The defendant, a marijuana trafficker for the Heath Street Gang, arranged to buy three pounds – a distributable amount – of marijuana in Randolph. He arrived at the meeting site for the deal – in the middle of a residential neighborhood in Randolph – armed with a firearm. The arranged drug deal then culminated in an exchange of gunfire involving the defendant and two other individuals in the middle of the neighborhood in broad daylight.

The nature of the shooting was brazen and shocking. Witnesses reported two males in a Durango and a third individual in a yard shooting at each other. (The defendant's phone was subsequently found in this yard.) Recovered security camera footage shows the driver of the Durango shoot, and audio captures the sound of other shots being fired, consistent with the third individual returning fire from the yard. Numerous shell casings were recovered from the areas of (1) where the Durango had been located during the shooting and (2) the yard where the defendant's phone was found. The Durango was subsequently located and found to have ballistic damage to it, consistent with being shot at by the third individual in the yard.

Thankfully, there was no evidence of anyone suffering injuries. While drug trafficking is inherently dangerous and harmful, here, the defendant's actions endangered not only the specific people involved in his drug trafficking activities, but also innocent individuals who lived or happened to be in the surrounding area. Any of the shots fired could easily have struck an innocent bystander.

By his actions, the defendant illustrated his not only his utter lack of respect for the law, but also, his complete disregard for the safety of others. The nature and circumstances of the offense warrant the requested 60-month sentence.

b. History and Characteristics of the Defendant

This most recent illustration of the defendant's lack of respect for the law is consistent with his actions over the years, as exemplified by his prior firearms-related conviction, several juvenile delinquencies, and numerous other arrests as a juvenile and adult. This history further supports a significant period of incarceration.

As a juvenile, the defendant was found delinquent numerous times, including for assault and battery, unarmed robbery, threat to commit crime, disorderly conduct, and attempt to commit crime (theft). PSR ¶¶ 23- 28.

In 2016, the defendant had a guilty filed for trespassing. *Id.* ¶ 29. Just seven months later, in September 2018, the defendant was convicted of firearm possession without a permit and carrying a loaded firearm without a license. *Id.* ¶ 30. And just seven months after his release in connection with these offenses, in May 2019, he was found in violation of probation. *Id.* Thereafter, a violation notice was filed in October 2020 and subsequently withdrawn in November 2020. *Id.*

It was in the face of this record, and despite court intervention and the opportunity to change his conduct, that approximately three years later, the defendant again engaged in dangerous criminal conduct and possessed a firearm in furtherance of his drug trafficking. The defendant's reoccurring involvement with criminal conduct demands a substantial period of incarceration.

c. Need to Promote Respect for the Law, Afford Deterrence, and Protect the Public

A significant sentence of imprisonment is also needed to deter the defendant and those similarly situated from continuing to engage in criminal conduct, promote respect for the law, and protect the public.

As noted above, while the defendant has served prison time before, it did not deter him nor impress upon him the necessity of conforming his conduct to the law. To the contrary, despite such, the defendant decided to again ignore the confines of the law and possess a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking. At no point on October 8, 2023 did the defendant care about abiding by the law, let alone the safety and lives of others. Rather, he again demonstrated a

complete disrespect for the law and posed a profound danger to the community. He and others tempted to engage in dangerous and serious criminal conduct must understand that any involvement will have harsh consequences, and a significant sentence of imprisonment is needed to do so.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, and the reasons to be offered at sentencing, the government respectfully requests that the Court impose a sentence of incarceration of 60 months. The government's requested sentence is the minimum sentence required by the statute and at the low end of the defendant's advisory Guidelines range. It is sufficient, but not greater than necessary, to reflect the seriousness of the offense and history and characteristics of the defendant, promote respect for the law, provide just punishment, and afford adequate deterrence.

Respectfully submitted,

JOSHUA S. LEVY
Acting United States Attorney

By: /s/ Sarah B. Hoefle
Sarah B. Hoefle
Assistant United States Attorney

Dated: September 2, 2024

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that this document filed through the ECF system will be sent electronically to the registered participants as identified on the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF).

/s/ Sarah B. Hoefle

Sarah B. Hoefle

Assistant United States Attorney

Date: September 2, 2024