



Department of Justice

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Northern District of California

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NORTH CAROLINA MAN SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON FOR CHARGES RELATING TO NORTH BAY ARMED HOME INVASION ROBBERY SCHEME

*Defendant Simmons was one of eight defendants who traveled from East Coast in plot to
steal money and marijuana in California*

SAN FRANCISCO – Jaray Simmons was sentenced today to 15 years in prison, and ordered to pay \$20,275.73 in restitution, for his role in a scheme to conduct armed home invasion robberies in Northern California to obtain marijuana for resale on the East Coast, announced United States Attorney David L. Anderson and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent in Charge John F. Bennett. The sentence was handed down by the Honorable Edward M. Chen, U.S. District Judge.

Simmons, 29, of Winston-Salem, N.C., pleaded guilty to the charges on May 7, 2019. According to his plea agreement, Simmons was one of eight codefendants who agreed to target houses in northern California he believed contained bulk quantities of marijuana and the cash proceeds of marijuana sales. The eight codefendants agreed to conduct armed home invasion robberies of the targeted homes and to distribute for a profit on the East Coast the marijuana they were able to steal.

In March of 2018, Simmons traveled by car with three codefendants from Winston-Salem to California to carry out the plan. When the four codefendants reached Sacramento, they obtained multiple weapons and one of the codefendants purchased supplies, including jackets, duffel bags, scissors, a vacuum sealer, and vacuum bags. The codefendant purchased these items to package for shipment the marijuana stolen during the home invasion robberies. Meanwhile, four co-defendants traveled from Richmond, Va., to Washington, D.C., and then from Washington by plane to San Francisco. After arriving in Northern California, the four Virginia codefendants obtained a supply of firearms and ammunition.

All eight defendants met in Novato, Calif., on March 12, 2019, and traveled in two cars from Novato to a residential street in Petaluma. The plea agreements provide the following facts regarding the events of the evening:

A codefendant kicked open the front door of the first residence and six of the coconspirators entered. The residence was occupied by a man and a woman who were forced inside the bathroom and bound with duct tape. At least one codefendant threatened to kill the victims if they did not cooperate, at least one codefendant pointed a firearm at the victims to threaten them into providing the location of marijuana and money, and at least one codefendant struck the male victim inside the bathroom in an effort to get him to disclose the location of marijuana and money. The victims explained they did not have any marijuana and that the defendants were in the wrong house.

Six of the defendants then walked to a nearby second house. The group separated into two smaller groups and broke into the second house through both the front door and a side door. A codefendant grabbed a telephone from a woman occupant and threw it on the floor. At least one codefendant questioned the female victim about the location of marijuana and money. The woman was dragged by the hair and locked inside a closet. The woman said there was no marijuana in the house but that she had money in a drawer.

Two codefendants who were outside the second house encountered a neighbor. They brought the neighbor into the second house, pointed a gun at the victim, tied him with an electrical extension cord, and repeatedly struck him while asking where the marijuana and money was located. The male victim repeated that the defendants were in the wrong house.

The defendants heard the police approaching and left the house. The defendants attempted to escape in the two vehicles in which they arrived. The police gave chase. Eventually, all the codefendants were apprehended, some as they abandoned their vehicle, others when they arrived at San Francisco International Airport later in the afternoon of March 12, 2018, and one defendant several days later.

On April 26, 2018, a federal grand jury indicted Simmons and seven codefendants, charging all with conspiracy to commit robbery affecting interstate commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a); conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute marijuana, in violation of 21

U.S.C. § 846; two counts of attempted robbery affecting interstate commerce, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a) and 2; and possession or use of a firearm during and in relation to and in furtherance of a crime of violence and a drug trafficking crime, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(A)(i) and 2. Simmons pleaded guilty to both conspiracy charges and to the firearm possession charge.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Chen sentenced the defendant to a three-year period of supervised release and ordered that Simmons pay restitution of \$20,275.73. Simmons has been in custody since his arrest on March 12, 2018, and will begin serving his sentence immediately.

Simmons is the second defendant to be sentenced in connection with the conspiracies. Other defendants who have pleaded guilty for their role in the scheme include the following:

Defendant	Age/Residence	Pleaded guilty (date)	Status
Siddiq Abdullah	22/Richmond, VA	May 7, 2019	Sentenced on August 21, 2019 to 84 months in prison
Nakia Jones	23/Richmond, VA	May 7, 2019	To be sentenced September 11, 2019
Melvin Corbin	20/Richmond, VA	May 9, 2019	To be sentenced September 4, 2019
Ledarrell Crockett	29/Winston-Salem, NC	May 29, 2019	To be sentenced September 25, 2019
Chrishawn Beal	22/Winston-Salem, NC	July 31, 2019	To be sentenced October 23, 2019

Assistant U.S. Attorney Christiaan Highsmith is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Lance Libatique. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the FBI, the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department, and the Santa Rosa Police Department. The investigation was conducted and funded in part by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, a multi-agency task force that coordinates long-term narcotics trafficking investigations.

Further Information:

Case No.: 18-179 EMC

A copy of this press release will be placed on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Abraham Simmons at (415) 436-7264 or by e-mail at Abraham.Simmons@usdoj.gov.