

NORTH CAROLINA: Fayetteville pastor gets 14 years on drug charges

Written by Drew Brooks, Staff writer
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A Fayetteville minister who worked as a bail bondsman has been sentenced to more than 14 years in prison on drug trafficking charges.

Robert Lee McQueen, 61, was sentenced Tuesday at a federal court in New Bern, according to a news release from U.S. Attorney George E.B. Holding.

McQueen - once a pastor at Burning Bush Missionary Baptist Church and the owner of McQ Bail Bonds - was first charged in October 2008 following an investigation by Fayetteville police.

McQueen and two co-defendants were arrested after police searched McQueen's property and found drugs, paraphernalia and money previously marked and used in drug buys by officers.

According to evidence presented at trial, Fayetteville police were first tipped off to suspected heroin sales Oct. 17, 2008. That month, police made seven purchases while performing surveillance at a residence owned by McQueen.

A search of McQueen's duplex apartment building at 1900 Slater Ave., his vehicle and a second home belonging to co-defendant Madeline Nadine Chambers turned up money used in drug buys, products to mix with drugs, more than 30 grams of heroin, two firearms and paraphernalia, investigators said.

The other co-defendant, Chester Arthur Hunt, was stopped leaving the property and found to be in possession of about 100 small packs of heroin.

Chambers and Hunt said they purchased their heroin from McQueen, investigators said.

Investigators said McQueen was distributing heroin out of a rental property he owned for about a year before he was arrested.

He primarily dealt to other heroin dealers in Fayetteville, the release said.

McQueen's charges were transferred to federal court following an indictment in September 2009 as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods - a federal, state and local initiative that encourages cooperation in prosecuting gun crimes.

McQueen was convicted in June on six drug charges and one firearms charge following a four-day trial in Wilmington.

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According to the U.S. Attorney's Office, McQueen made several attempts to influence his federal trial.

The release alleges that McQueen offered money to one witness to encourage false testimony and offered to pay the bond of one of his codefendants if that person would flee the state.

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