

Ashland man gets 15 years in prison for meth trafficking

An Ashland man was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his involvement in the trafficking of crystal methamphetamine within Ashland County.

Omar Coleman, 41, received the prison sentence in Ashland County Common Pleas Court. The 15 years in prison are all mandatory time for engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity and complicity to aggravated trafficking in drugs, both of which are first-degree felonies, along with a gun specification.

A jury found Coleman guilty of six felony counts during an October trial. Testimony during the trial revealed that Coleman was traveling with co-defendant Robert Virgili to Akron to pick up crystal methamphetamine and then three other co-defendants would assist in distributing the drug.

Coleman's attorney, Donald Wick, said Monday that Coleman had been battling drug abuse throughout his life and that "drug abuse brought him before the court today."

Coleman apologized to his family in the courtroom and others he may have affected.

"I acknowledge the fact that I made a lot of bad choices and decisions in my life, I can't deny that," Coleman said while addressing Judge Ronald P. Forsthoefel. He added that he didn't "want to make excuses for the choices I have made."

Assistant county prosecutor Victor Perez said the case was a chance for Forsthoefel to send a message by handing down a substantial sentence to Coleman.

"Drugs have ravaged a lot of communities in this the nation, in this city and this county," Perez said to Forsthoefel. "And you have seen it throughout the years on the bench. You have an opportunity here having heard all the evidence of this case ... you heard how they set up this operation in this county distributing meth. It affected a lot of people."

Forsthoefel made a finding that the conduct in the case did call for consecutive sentences to be served and gave Coleman seven years in prison each for the two first-degree felony charges and the gun specification.

Coleman was initially arrested at a Dec. 27, 2017, traffic stop by Ashland Police and a subsequent investigation by the METRICH Enforcement Unit.

Coleman requested that an appeal be filed on his behalf for his convictions and sentence in the case.

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