
Head of \$10M drug ring gets 82-month federal prison term

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CAMDEN

Bruce McDade, who had been a player in one of Camden's largest open-air drug markets before skipping town after his federal indictment in 1998, was sentenced Wednesday to 82 months in federal prison.

The term handed down by U.S. District Judge Robert Kugler was more than three years lighter than the 10-year sentence sought by Assistant U.S. Magistrate Howard Wiener.

McDade's business partner in the drug scheme, Jonathan Ringo, 40, was released from federal prison in mid-June. The two had set up a network of drug markets and stash houses using mostly abandoned homes in a cluster of streets known as The Terraces.

When the two were arrested by a Camden County task force in 1997, investigators estimated the value of their illegal business at \$10 million a year.

At their arrest, police confiscated 7 pounds of cocaine and \$60,000.

McDade, on bail on the state charges when a federal indictment covering the same series of criminal acts was returned, fled. He remained a fugitive until May 2006, when federal agents arrested him when he showed up at a Philadelphia hospital to participate in a for-pay medical study.

On Wednesday, McDade's comments to Kugler about how he stayed crime-free for six years and worked in federal detention for the last 13 months as a cell-companion to suicidal inmates was interrupted by his mother, Sylvia.

"It's all my fault," shouted his mother, Sylvia McDade, 49, who said she had neglected her son while she was a drug addict, a drunk and a prostitute. "That boy suffered because of my addiction. This boy cried and begged for me to stop. He was subjected to watching me for years and years. I did this to you and I'm sorry."

Throughout her comments, made first from the gallery in the courtroom and then from a lectern in front of the judge, Bruce McDade, 34, motioned to his mother to remain calm.

"I love you. It's OK," he said repeatedly and blew a kiss at her.

"I'm not trying to cover for anything he did," she said. "Drugs can kill. Drugs destroy your family. He would come home and see me liquored up, drugged up. I couldn't sleep at night. I had to go out and get me a fix.

"I lost everything I ever wanted. I destroyed his life."

Defense attorney Rocco Cipparone said Bruce McDade had been forced to leave his mother's home when he was 15 and, despite moving from place to place, graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School and started college.

"I can't change my past," McDade said before the sentence was announced.

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