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**FORMER LETTER CARRIER SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR HEROIN
DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY**

Agreed to Divert Packages of Drugs Sent Through the Mail in Exchange for Cash

Baltimore, Maryland – Chief U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced former U.S. Postal Service employee Linwood R. Nelson, Jr., age 32, of Baltimore, today to 30 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for federal charges related to a conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute heroin, and to diverting packages of drugs sent through the U.S. mail and delivering them to co-conspirators

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Postal Inspector in Charge Maria L. Kelokates of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service - Washington Division; Assistant Special Agent in Charge Don A. Hibbert of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Baltimore District Office; and Colonel William M. Pallozzi, Superintendent of the Maryland State Police.

According to Nelson's plea agreement, he was a letter carrier employed by the United States Postal Service and assigned a delivery route in Woodstock, Maryland. From July 2014, through September 11, 2014, Nelson agreed to divert U.S. mail parcels containing drugs, including heroin, from his regular delivery route and deliver those packages directly to various co-conspirators.

Nelson provided co-conspirators with an address along his route and instructed them to send parcels to this address, but to use false addressee names on each parcel. Co-conspirators regularly communicated with Nelson via telephone and text message to provide descriptions of the parcels sent, including the colors of the mailed boxes and the false addressee names used. Nelson then used the information to remove the parcels from his delivery batches, falsely scan them as "delivered" in the U.S. Postal Service computer tracking system, and then bring them to co-conspirators at an agreed-upon location. Nelson received cash in exchange for delivering the parcels, typically \$500 per parcel.

On September 11, 2014, Nelson was arrested in possession of a package containing approximately two kilograms of heroin. When arrested, he was on his way to meet with a co-conspirator at a pre-determined location, where Nelson was to provide the parcel containing heroin to the co-conspirator in exchange for cash.

Nelson admitted that during the course of the conspiracy the conspirators distributed more than one kilogram of heroin.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, DEA, and Maryland State Police for their work in the investigation. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys James G. Warwick and Joshua T. Ferrentino, who prosecuted the case.