

Heroin dealer gets 6 to 12 years

He was jailed for running a multimillion-dollar drug factory in Phila.'s Olney neighborhood.

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It was a multimillion-dollar heroin organization. Its factory was a 'packaging house' in Philadelphia's Olney section where raw heroin from New York and Miami would be ground, strained, measured out and repackaged for sale to street drug dealers. Its company cars were two minivans equipped with ingenious secret compartments to stash drugs and weapons.

But what his business acumen ultimately yielded leader Denis Polo was a six-to-12-year prison sentence, plus five years probation and a \$25,000 fine, issued yesterday by Common Pleas Court Judge Steven R. Geroff.

Polo, 29, of the 4000 block of North Marshall Street, was convicted in June of possession with intent to deliver and conspiracy.

Evidence presented to the jury during the trial included items seized from a raid on the home at 5207 North Mascher Street - digital scales, coffee grinders still dusted with heroin, strainers, clear cellophane packets, and the red inkpads and stamps bearing their drug-enterprise logo, "Nyquil."

"What the 'Nyquil' logo would say to this group [of drug dealers and users] was that they were selling good stuff - 86 to 96 percent pure," said Assistant District Attorney Scott Sigman.

Jurors also watched a video of the secret compartments hidden in the rear of a Dodge Caravan and a Plymouth Voyager. To access the hidden stash, the vans first had to be turned on. Then, a hidden relay switch was triggered when a magnetized ballpoint pen was waived under the steering wheel.

"This was a highly organized and methodical drug organization," Sigman told Geroff. "It was complex, and it was sophisticated."

Polo and his accomplice, Edgar Alamo, imported large quantities of raw heroin from New York and Miami, Sigman said.

The processed and repackaged drug was distributed in Philadelphia and in Delaware.

"This is not your standard case of a street dealer selling a few packets of drugs... this is a case of dealers selling to dealers," Sigman told the judge.

Defense attorney Mark Mungello asked Geroff not to sentence his client to more than the mandatory minimum five to 10 years in prison, noting that Polo had no prior criminal history.

But Geroff called the business "a vast illegal enterprise," and issued the sentence requested by the prosecution.

Alamo, 34, previously pleaded guilty and is serving a five to 10 year prison sentence.

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