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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Opioids Seized in Drug Trafficking Bust

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution and the Drug Enforcement Administration today announced the arrests of two drug traffickers transporting methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl into Florida. DEA agents, working with the Office of Statewide Prosecution, arrested Christopher Lavant and Jeffrey Richardson on Thursday in Manatee County on charges related to the trafficking of 474 grams of methamphetamine and 532 grams heroin mixed with fentanyl.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "We must stop the trafficking of deadly synthetic opioids into our state and work together to end the opioid crisis. As Attorney General, I am committed to working with federal, state and local law enforcement to arrest drug traffickers and seize illegal drugs before they can kill Floridians. This case is a great example of how I will continue to work with all our great law enforcement partners to reduce the supply of deadly opioids in Florida. Ending the opioid crisis is one of my top priorities and I will continue to work through our Opioid Abuse Working Group to identify solutions to this crisis and save lives."

According to the investigation, in December 2018, an accomplice of Lavant and Richardson began cooperating with law enforcement and supplied information about the operation. The DEA investigated the operation and put the suspects under surveillance, discovering an intent to sell the drugs in Manatee County. Lavant and Richardson delivered the illegal drugs from Georgia to Ellenton, Florida, staying in a Super 8 motel. Law enforcement obtained a search warrant and seized the narcotics while making the arrests.

Lavant and Richardson are both being held in Manatee County jail. Both are charged with trafficking in methamphetamine and heroin.

The DEA, Manatee County Sheriff's Office, Bradenton Police Department and Attorney General Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution all assisted in this case. Deputy Chief Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Joseph Spataro will handle the case.