



Leader of Fort Myers drug trafficking ring guilty of killing FBI informant

A Fort Myers man has been found guilty of conspiracy to distribute drugs and of killing a confidential informant.

Robert Ward, 53, faces a mandatory sentence of life in federal prison, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida.

His sentencing hearing has not yet been set.

Ward's federal case was connected to the four Fort Myers police officers who were placed on leave prior to the release of the Freeh report, an audit of the department that revealed allegations of corruption and mismanagement.

According to evidence and testimony presented at trial, Ward was the leader of a drug trafficking organization that distributed cocaine in Fort Myers and other locations for more than a decade up until his arrest in 2018.

Federal investigators used confidential informants to purchase drugs from Ward.

One informant, Kristopher Smith, a member of Ward's organization, was killed after Ward learned of his cooperation with authorities and ordered his death sometime in 2012, prosecutors said. Smith was a 27-year-old who was gunned down in the Dunbar area of Fort Myers after dropping his child off at school in 2013.

Ward solicited James Broomfield to kill Smith in exchange for \$30,000, according to the news release.

Investigators said they also found more than \$200,000 in cash hidden inside of a storage unit in Tampa rented by Ward.

Source:

<https://www.winknews.com/2022/02/23/leader-of-fort-myers-drug-trafficking-ring-guilty-of-killing-fbi-informant/>