

GUT FEELING RESULTS IN DRUG SENDER'S SENTENCE

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Trooper B.D. Gore thought something was fishy when he pulled over a middle-aged male driver on the turnpike last year.

While writing a speeding ticket, his suspicions grew. The driver of the Lincoln Continental said he was going from Charleston to Beckley. But he was in Chelyan, driving north.

Then Gore spotted oranges and a Miami newspaper in the back seat. After asking to search the car, Gore found the biggest stash of cocaine ever seized in West Virginia - 22 pounds.

On Friday, a father of six who sent the drugs from Florida was sentenced to 10 years in jail. Willie M. Bullard, 35, of Miramar, Fla., had a clean record and a background in fighting pit bulls, said Assistant U.S. Attorney **Mike Callaghan**.

Bullard was not one of the two men in the car. He had sent the drugs with an uncle and another man he knew through the pit bull circuit.

The uncle, Walter Revis of Youngstown, Ohio, who is in his 50s, was a constable in Ohio until his arrest. After telling police that he was carrying the drugs for a nephew, Revis pleaded guilty and was sentenced to nine years in prison.

Revis' traveling companion, Walter Starks of Youngstown, Ohio, who is in his 40s or 50s, was sentenced to eight years in prison after admitting his guilt. He had worked in a body shop, Callaghan said.

Gore found the cocaine in a crock-pot box in the trunk of the Lincoln.

The powder was 84 percent pure and worth \$2.5 million, prosecutors said. "Some was going to a stop-off point in Youngstown and some was to go on to Indianapolis," Callaghan said.

"The average cocaine we get here is a lot less pure," Callaghan said. He said it had not been diluted much in its journey from Colombia, cocaine producer to the world.

Bullard lived in a \$121,000 home in Miramar, but aside from the pit-bull fighting - for which he traveled around the country - he did not have a job.

Chief U.S. District Judge Charles Haden II sentenced Bullard and fined him \$000.

Eighteen months after the traffic stop, Gore barely remembers the men he had stopped for speeding, and never heard what happened with the case. He said that after five years on the turnpike and 12 with the state police, he can usually tell when drivers are up to something.

"In talking to people, and writing up a ticket, you know something doesn't seem right. Generally, if it seems wrong, it is," he said.