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## Drug Boss 'Thor' Ordered to Pay £155k After Multi-Million Cocaine Plot

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— Categories: Crime



A Merseyside crime boss nicknamed “Thor” has been ordered to hand over more than £155,000 after his gang attempted to smuggle £140 million worth of cocaine into the UK hidden inside flour shipments from Sierra Leone.

Darren Schofield, 45, led an organised crime group that arranged to import 1.3 tonnes of the class A drug, which was intercepted by the UK Border Force at the Port of Felixstowe in Suffolk in June 2022. The shipment, concealed in sacks of garri flour, had travelled from the Sierra Leone capital, Freetown via Morocco.

At Liverpool Crown Court this week, prosecutors detailed how Schofield profited by nearly £5 million from his role in the plot. However, available assets were valued at £155,930.26, and Judge Brian Cummings KC made a forfeiture order for that amount. Under the Proceeds of Crime Act, law enforcement will still be able to recover further sums from Schofield in the future.

If the payment is not made within three months, Schofield will face an extra year in prison and will still owe the money. Other members of the gang will face similar proceedings later this year, and the court will also consider serious crime prevention orders.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) launched Operation Lemonlike after uncovering the plan. Prosecutors described Schofield as a key organiser, coordinating the importation and arranging drug and cash handovers in various locations, including a Beefeater pub car park and a GP surgery.

Several associates were linked to the operation, including former British Masters light heavyweight boxing champion Carl “Dynamite” Dilks, identified as EncroChat user “Cherry Vape”. Surveillance revealed coded communications between gang members and the movement of drugs and money.

Stephen Martland, 70, was involved in securing an industrial unit in Wigan for the delivery of the drugs and in sourcing chemicals to cut the cocaine for resale. Paul Mockett, 50, set up a company to obtain these chemicals. Neil Maguire, using the handle “Holy Book” on EncroChat, traded cocaine with other contacts.

Authorities intercepted messages showing discussions about the operation, including one where Martland told Schofield, “We’re so close to big bucks,” as they prepared the premises. Undercover officers later controlled the delivery of a container, which was not unloaded due to equipment issues.

The investigation led to multiple arrests. Schofield admitted to conspiracy to import cocaine and was jailed for 20 years, reduced from 30 due to his guilty plea. Martland was convicted after trial and sentenced to 21 years, while Mockett received 13 and a half years.

Maguire was jailed for 11 years and four months for conspiracy to supply cocaine, and Paul O’Shea, known as “Doc”, was given six years for the same offence. Dilks was admitted to conspiracy to supply cocaine and was sentenced to eight years and eight months. David

Jones was sentenced to three and a half years for being concerned in the supply of cocaine, and Darren Wetton received a 12-month suspended sentence for supplying cannabis.