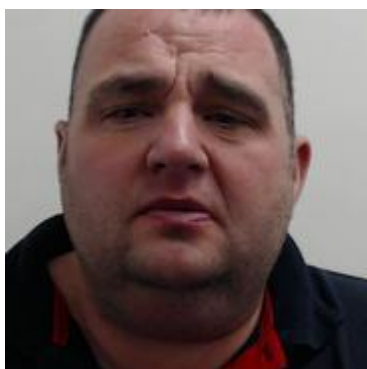


Two drugs couriers jailed after being caught with cocaine valued at almost £6m

Two drugs couriers have been jailed after being caught bringing almost £6m worth of cocaine into Scotland.

David Murdoch, 56, and Graham McCulloch, 39, both pled guilty to supplying drugs and possessing criminal property in connection with serious organised crime.





Earlier today Murdoch was sentenced to a total of 10 years and McCulloch to 10 years. They were both issued with a Serious Crime Prevention Order that will be in place for three years upon release.

The pair came to the attention of police after an intelligence-led operation carried out between Police Scotland and the Metropolitan Police on 12 May 2020. Officers watched Murdoch and McCulloch dropping off heavy bags – presumed to contain large sums of money – at a location in central London.

A few days later, on 18 May, officers from Police Scotland and the Metropolitan Police carried out a cross-border surveillance operation and followed Murdoch as he drove from Stonehouse in Lanarkshire to London. At a service station on the outskirts of the capital, he met McCulloch, driving a BMW, and the pair drove in convoy to central London.

Once again, Murdoch unloaded heavy bags, presumed to contain money in payment for drugs, at the same location. McCulloch remained nearby whilst this was carried out.

Murdoch then went to two other locations, in London and Kent, where he picked up bags, later found to contain cocaine, before meeting McCulloch in a hotel car park, where a bag was placed into the boot of McCulloch's car. The two vehicles headed back to Scotland and were intercepted by Police Scotland at a service station at Ecclefechan.

In the van, police found 43 blocks of cocaine weighing 52 kilos hidden in a specially built 'hide' operated with a hydraulic system.

In the BMW, there were five blocks of cocaine and a suitcase full of sterling and Euro notes, totalling £409,595 and €289,500.

The cocaine found would be worth up to £5,900,000 when cut for sale.

Officers searched the men's homes; at McCulloch's house they found a mobile with notes detailing drugs deliveries between 21 April and 8 May 2020. At Murdoch's home they found another van with a 'hide'.

Jennifer Harrower, Procurator Fiscal for Specialist Casework, said: "I hope these convictions and sentences send a strong message to others involved in bringing drugs into the country.

"It is thanks to intelligence that we were able to stop these drugs from reaching Scotland's streets, and this kind of operation is invaluable to us as prosecutors working with our partners.

"Drugs do great harm to communities across Scotland and we will continue to work as a key part of the Serious and Organised Crime Taskforce to protect those communities."

Detective Chief Superintendent Stuart Houston, Police Scotland's Head of Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit, said: "Our continued success in seizing drugs is a huge blow

to the activities of organised criminals. Making Scotland a hostile environment for criminals to operate remains an absolute priority for Police Scotland and underlines our commitment to the country's Serious Organised Crime Strategy and Taskforce.

"I welcome their convictions, and the sentences handed to Murdoch and McCulloch today as well as take the opportunity to show my appreciation to the officers for the work involved. This also shows the value and importance of our continued partnership working with other police forces and law enforcement agencies including the National Crime Agency."