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## The drug dealers, thieves and gang leaders who are granted clemency by Biden

By **JOE HUTCHISON**, US SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

PUBLISHED: 17:04 EDT, 12 December 2024 | UPDATED: 18:24 EDT, 12 December 2024

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President Biden **commuted the sentences of nearly 1,500 people on Thursday which included** drug traffickers, embezzlers and even a leader of a biker gang.

In the largest single-day act of clemency in modern history, pardoned 39 Americans convicted of nonviolent crimes and handed out 1,499 commutations.

A commutation reduces a sentence that is being served, but does not erase a conviction nor imply innocence, according to the Department of Justice.

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One of those 1,499 was Rita Crundwell, the former comptroller of the city of Dixon, **Illinois**, who was involved in stealing over \$50 million in city funds.

She had served as Dixon's comptroller for over 20 years and pleaded guilty to embezzling the funds in 2013.

The stolen money, which she began to accumulate in 1990, was said to be used to **support her lavish lifestyle as well as a horse breeding business she ran.**

The city managed to recover some of Crundwell's stolen money, after they sold some of her belongings and used it as a recovery fund.

State marshals managed **to sell off a chandelier made of old revolvers**, Western-style furniture, horses, vehicles, jewelry and her homes.



**In the largest single-day act of clemency in modern history, pardoned 39 Americans convicted of nonviolent crimes and handed out 1,499 commutations**

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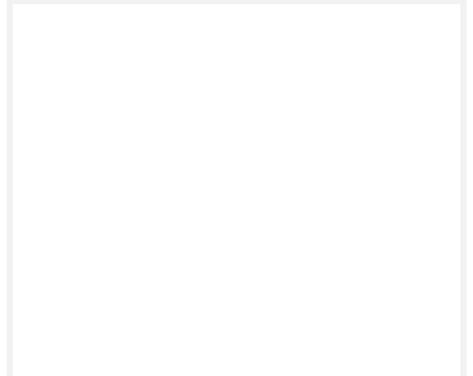
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Dixon city comptroller Rita Crundwell, left, leaves the Federal Building in Rockford, Illinois, on Wednesday afternoon, April 18, 2012

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A chandelier made of revolvers, spurs and cowhide shades is seen Friday, Dec. 7, 2012, inside one of the homes owned by former Dixon comptroller Rita Crundwell

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She had numerous properties, which included two Dixon homes, her ranch, a home in Florida and prime farmland.

She had been originally sentenced to 19 years and seven months behind bars but was released into home detention due to being at high-risk of Covid.

The commutations were announced for those who were placed on home confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Biden administration said that individuals who had been placed on home confinement had successfully reintegrated into their families and communities'.

Walter Diggles was also granted a commutation on his nine-year federal prison sentence for his financial crimes which involved stealing federal grants.

Diggles, alongside his wife Rosie and daughter Anita, were sentenced in 2018 after they stole taxpayer funds that were intended to aid victims of Hurricane Rita, Katrina, Ike and Dolly.

The Texas-based family managed to devise a scheme to obtain and make use of federal grants that Congress handed down to help those affected by the storms.

Diggles was the head of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments and used his power to approve inflated rates and requests for reimbursement from grant funds.



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He had his wife and daughter prepare many of the aid requests, before he then approved them.

His wife and daughter were both sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons search tool they are no longer in custody.



Crundwell had numerous properties, which included two Dixon homes, her ranch, a home in Florida and prime farmland. One of her former homes in Dixon is seen here



Walter Diggles, seen here, was also granted a commutation on his 9-year federal prison sentence for his financial crimes which involved stealing federal grants

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Rosie Diggles is seen here on the left, with her daughter Anita also pictured on the right

In 2009, Bobby Duwayne Froman of Levelland, Texas, pleaded guilty to having a role as the leader of a large-scale methamphetamine trafficking organization.

Froman was probed by authorities for drug trafficking activities that he was involved in with his gang the Aces and Eights Outlaw Motorcycle Gang.

His posse, of which he was President, acted as a support club of the Bandidos Outlaw Motorcycle Gang and helped distribute crystal meth across West Texas.

A federal grand jury had returned a 110-count indictment that charged him and 28 other defendants for their part in the illicit business.

Authorities at the time said his gang would travel to California and acquire the drug by the pound, before transporting it back to Texas.

There they mixed the drug with adulterants before splicing it into smaller quantities for sale, accepting money, guns or sex as payment. He too had his sentence commuted

Crystal Busby-Tetzlaff was sentenced in 2018 alongside her partner Raymond after pleading guilty to being in possession of crystal meth with intent to distribute.

She was sentenced to ten years, with five years of supervised release after authorities seized a total of two pounds of meth from their home.

They also found four ounces of the drug in a bag her partner was carrying, as well as scales, numerous plastic baggies and drug ledgers inside.



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Froman, seen here, was the President of the Aces and Eights Outlaw Motorcycle Gang

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 A collage of images showing tributes to actor Chuck Norris, including Sylvester Stallone, Lee Majors, and Priscilla Presley.

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 Two portraits of men: Josh Duggar on the left and Joseph Duggar on the right.

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 A photograph of Donald Trump speaking at a podium during a press conference.

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 A high-angle photograph of a large, dense crowd of people gathered for an outdoor prayer event.

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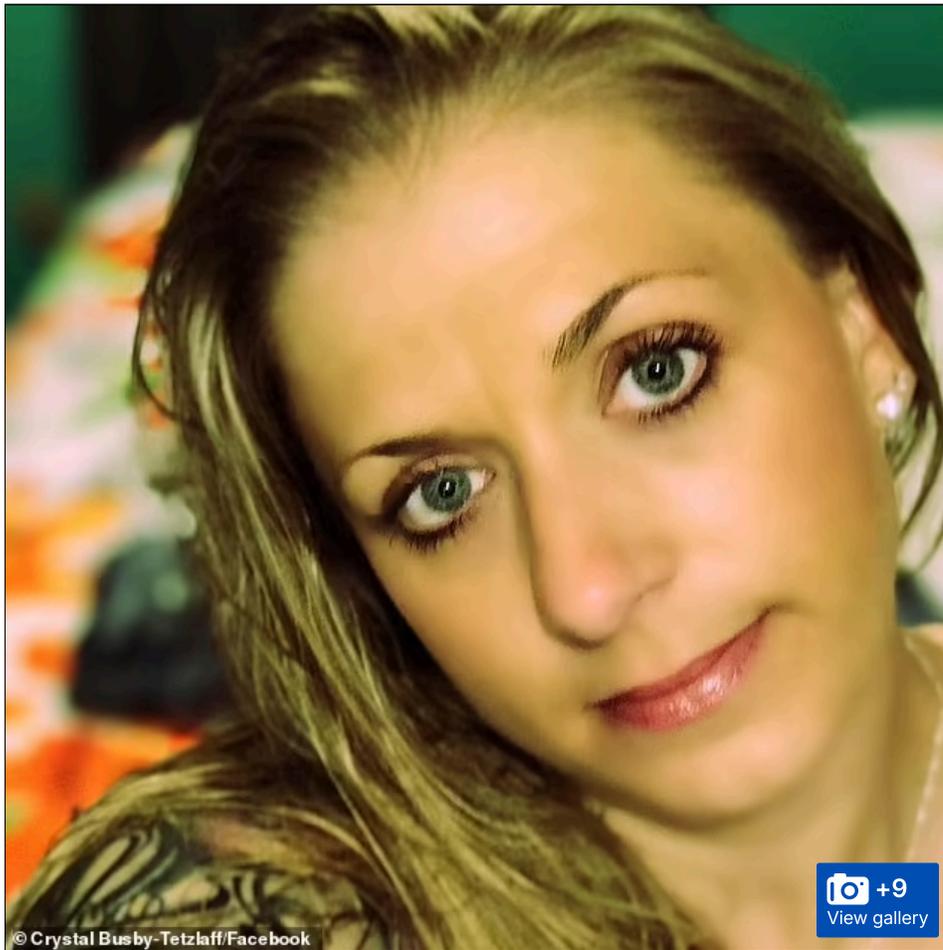
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 A portrait of a man wearing a blue beanie and a dark jacket, smiling.

After another raid on a storage unit, a total of six pounds of pure crystal meth was seized by the authorities.

RLS Ar Abdul Aziz from Baton Rouge, Louisiana was also among the list of commutations after he was sentenced in 2012 to 30 years behind bars for his part in a crack cocaine distribution scheme.



© Crystal Busby-Tetzlaff/Facebook

Crystal Busby-Tetzlaff, seen here, was sentenced in 2018 alongside her partner Raymond after pleading guilty to being in possession of crystal meth with intent to distribute



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After another raid on a storage unit, a total of six pounds of pure crystal meth was seized by the

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authorities. A stock image of the drug is seen here

At the time of his sentencing he was designated as a 'career offender' due to have two prior convictions for federal drug trafficking. He was also handed a commutation.

Edward Abell III was also among the list, having pleaded guilty in 2018 to five counts of wire fraud and three counts of money laundering.

Abell had been the chief financial officer of two Boston-based companies, one of which he managed to embezzle \$3.8 million from.

He was found to have made out company checks to Pinehurst Tax Associates, a firm that he owned but did not provide any services to his employer.

Abell had set up the company as a way to channel embezzled funds into his personal bank accounts and set up fake employees to avoid detection.

In 2016 he was let go from the company for unknown reasons, and was hired at another firm where he again kept up the charade - making off with \$140,000.

Prosecutors said he used the money to purchase a home in Fryeburg, Maine, buy a Porsche Macan as well as a Ford-350 Super Duty.

Another on the commutation list was Dwayne Appling, 37, who is serving 27 years in prison after he was found to head an organization that flooded Waterloo, Illinois, with heroin in 2014.

Prosecutors at the time said his organization was 'extensive', and involved thirty other individuals who were also similarly prosecuted.

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Dwayne Appling, 37, was sentenced to 27 years in prison in 2014 after he was found to head an organization that flooded Waterloo, Illinois, with heroin

According to a [WCFC Courier](#) story from 2011, he had gone on the run after a round of grand jury indictments concerning his heroin ring.

That indictment had stemmed from a raid on 17 homes in the city that turned up quantities of heroin, methadone, oxycodone and guns.

In 2017, Shelinder Aggarwal of Huntsville, Alabama, was sentenced to 15 years in prison after he was found to have handed out illegal prescriptions for painkillers.

Authorities said Aggarwal was the nation's highest Medicare prescriber of opioids during the height of his practice.

He was found to have conducted health care fraud totaling \$9.5 million in unneeded and unused urine tests.

Aggarwal was ordered to forfeit \$6.7 million and to give up his former clinic,

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and was ordered to pay \$6.7 million in restitution to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama.

Authorities said he ran a 'pill mill', and would see around 80 to 145 patients a day in 2012, the majority would get prescriptions.

Court records said initial visits lasted five minutes or less, and any follows up would take two minutes or less.

He pleaded guilty to having patients undergo unnecessary urine drug tests that he did not need or use, and would bill insurance companies for them.

In a plea agreement he said his primary motivation for doing so was for 'financial gain'.

Biden said he would be taking more steps in the weeks ahead and would continue to review clemency petitions.

The second largest single-day act of clemency was by Barack Obama, with 330, shortly before leaving office in 2017.

The clemency follows a broad pardon for his son Hunter, who was prosecuted for gun and tax crimes.



Illinois

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