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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2007
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GRAND RAPIDS ARMED CRACK COCAINE DEALER SENTENCED

GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan – Lord Shawn Russell, 51, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was sentenced to 57 years (684 months) in prison for crack cocaine and firearms charges, U.S. Attorney Charles R. Gross announced today.

After a four-day jury trial last summer, Russell was convicted of eight separate gun and drug charges, including maintaining two drug houses in Grand Rapids, possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine, possessing and discharging firearms during drug trafficking crimes, and being a felon in possession of firearms.

On June 10, 2006, Kent County Sheriff's Deputies and Grand Rapids Police responded to 911 calls reporting shots fired at a Grand Rapids apartment complex. Neighbors reported that resident Russell was selling drugs from his apartment, and later testified that they saw him shooting a handgun. Police located and apprehended Russell, who had \$11,374 in cash in his pocket, but no known employment.

With the assistance of a trained canine unit, police located Russell's .380 caliber

semiautomatic pistol partially buried behind the apartments. Forensic experts were able to match the gun to shell casings found at the scene, as well as bullets lodged in the walls of the apartment complex. Police executed a search warrant at Russell's apartment and found paraphernalia consistent with narcotics trafficking. The apartment appeared to have been ransacked. Experienced vice detectives testified that armed robbers frequently target drug houses to steal narcotics and/or cash, and that Russell had likely fired in defense of his "stash". Police found two additional pistols in the trunk of Russell's car, and a baggie filled with crack cocaine in the parking lot. DNA evidence recovered from the baggie was matched to Russell.

The government also presented evidence at trial that Russell maintained another drug house in Grand Rapids in 2005. On that occasion, police executed a search warrant and recovered drug distribution paraphernalia and three more pistols from Mr. Russell. Russell had over \$4,000 in his shoe at the time of his 2005 arrest.

At sentencing, the government presented evidence that Russell had been a "pimp" in control of at least ten prostitutes in Grand Rapids, including a former teenage runaway. Russell kept the prostitutes' profits, paid them in crack cocaine, and brutalized them with physical violence. In addition to the 57-year prison sentence, visiting U.S. District Judge George Caram Steeh sentenced Russell to serve 3 years of supervised release. Because there is no parole in the federal system, Russell's sentence effectively means that he will spend the rest of his life in prison.

U.S. Attorney Gross commended the work of the Kent County Sheriff's Department, the Grand Rapids Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) for their work on this case. Mr. Gross noted that "protecting our communities from gun

violence and the scourge of crack cocaine is of paramount importance to the United States Attorney's Office. Thankfully, Lord Shawn Russell has now been permanently removed as a source of those problems."

This case was prosecuted on behalf of the United States of America by Assistant United States Attorney Nils Kessler.

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