



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**GRAND RAPIDS CRACK DEALER CONVICTED**

**GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan** – Joseph Mantrell Maze, age 25, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was convicted yesterday by a jury following a two-day trial of possession with intent to distribute cocaine base (“crack cocaine”). Maze faces a minimum sentence of ten years’ imprisonment with a maximum potential sentence of life imprisonment.

On July 11, 2007, a federal grand jury returned an indictment, charging Maze with possession with intent to distribute five grams or more of crack cocaine. The case arose from an incident on June 21, 2007, in which Grand Rapids Police Officers observed Maze milling about in a known drug trafficking area. When the officers attempted to make contact with Maze, he took off running. The officers eventually apprehended him, but only after witnessing him dropping a bag of crack cocaine to the ground. The crack was tested by the Michigan State Police Forensic Laboratory, which weighed 7.53 grams.

Maze had incurred four prior drug-trafficking convictions. These convictions include the following: (1) a June 14, 2001, conviction for possession of a narcotic-cocaine, less than 25 grams; (2) an October 15, 2002, conviction for delivery-manufacture of a controlled substance,

less than fifty grams; (3) an October 28, 2003, conviction for delivery-manufacture of a controlled substance, less than fifty grams; and (4) an October 28, 2003, conviction for delivery-manufacture marijuana. All four convictions were incurred in the 17th Circuit Court, Kent County, Michigan.

The investigation was a coordinated effort of the Grand Rapids Police Department and the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

Maze has been held in custody since being charged federally with this offense, and he was remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal to await sentencing. The Court has not yet set a sentencing date.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Brian P. Lennon and Phillip J. Green.

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