



# Department of Justice

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## DALLAS MAN FOUND GUILTY OF UNLAWFUL FIREARM POSSESSION

### Defendant Faces Up to Life in Prison

**DALLAS** — Christopher Joe Cantu, of Dallas, was found guilty by a federal jury yesterday of being a felon in possession of a loaded firearm in connection with his April 2007 arrest, announced U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper of the Northern District of Texas. Because he is charged as an “armed career criminal,” Cantu, 35, faces a sentence of up to life in prison for possessing the firearm as he fled his car during a traffic stop in west Dallas.

The jury heard evidence that Dallas Police Department officers were patrolling in the area of Palacios and Bernal in west Dallas in the early morning hours of April 4, 2007. The officers saw a red Eagle Talon run two stop signs, and conducted a traffic stop in front of a nearby house.

Cantu and his passenger both left the car as the officers pulled to a stop, with Cantu walking toward a parked van and the passenger running down Palacios. Cantu was carrying an object that appeared to be a blue apron. The officers witnessed Cantu kneeling down and placing the item under the van. When the officers went to retrieve the item, they discovered a 9 millimeter pistol, which was loaded with 16 bullets, ready to fire, and a blue bullet-proof vest. The passenger, who was identified as Cantu’s brother-in-law, was detained by the officers after he threw several baggies of cocaine and marijuana as he was running. In the Talon, the officers also found a black wool cap, which had been fashioned into a ski mask.

A Dallas Police Officer testified at Cantu’s October 16, 2007, detention hearing that Cantu was a member of the prison gang Puro Tango Blast. Because Cantu was previously convicted of more than three felony crimes of violence, he was charged under the federal Armed Career Criminal Act, which carries a maximum punishment of life imprisonment.

The case was adopted by the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area task force of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF) and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office under the Project Safe Neighborhoods program, a nationwide effort which targets gun crime. U.S. Attorney Roper praised the investigative efforts of the Dallas Police Department and the ATF. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jordan A. Konig and Brandon McCarthy.

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