



U.S. Department of Justice

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GRAND RAPIDS CRACK DEALER RECEIVES 20-YEAR SENTENCE

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – Joseph Maze, 25, of Grand Rapids, was sentenced to twenty years in prison for possessing more than five grams of cocaine base (“crack” cocaine) with the intent to distribute it, U.S. Attorney Donald A. Davis announced today. U.S. District Judge Robert J. Jonker also ordered Maze to serve ten years of supervision by the Probation Office upon his release from prison. Maze was convicted following a three-day trial.

On June 21, 2007, Grand Rapids Police Officers were patrolling the Baxter neighborhood, which has been plagued with street-level drug trafficking and gang violence. During their patrol, the officers observed Maze in the parking lot of a store engaged in what appeared to be a drug transaction. When the officers approached, Maze took off running. The officers gave chase, repeatedly ordering Maze to stop, to no avail. At one point, one of the officers observed Maze drop a clear plastic bag. When Maze was finally apprehended, he resisted arrest; two officers had to struggle to get Maze under control. One of the officers immediately backtracked along the route Maze had run, and he found a plastic bag, containing 7.53 grams of crack cocaine, approximately thirty feet from Maze’s location. The officers found \$460.00 in Maze’s pocket.

The defendant was sentenced as a “career offender,” having incurred the following prior convictions: (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.

U.S. Attorney Davis commended the Grand Rapids Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) for their work on the case. This prosecution was initiated as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a combined federal, state and local initiative designed to deter violent crime and illegal drug trafficking. This case was prosecuted on behalf of the United States by Assistant U.S. Attorney Phillip J. Green.

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