

NEWS RELEASE



*Office of the United States Attorney
Western District of Louisiana*

DONALD W. WASHINGTON
United States Attorney

United States Courthouse • 300 Fannin Street, Suite 3201 • Shreveport, Louisiana 71101-3068 • (318) 676-3600
United States Courthouse • 800 Lafayette Street, Suite 2200 • Lafayette, Louisiana 70501-7206 • (337) 262-6618

**For Immediate Release
February 24, 2005**

GUN CRIME = JAIL TIME

Lake Charles, Louisiana . . . **GREGORY A. COLE, JR.**, age 24, from Lake Charles, Louisiana, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Patricia Minaldi to 38 months imprisonment to be followed by 3 years supervised release for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, announced United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and ATF Special Agent in Charge Mark Chait. COLE was indicted by a federal grand jury in August 2004 and pled guilty in October 2004.

COLE pled guilty in Calcasieu Parish to simple burglary on June 18, 2001 and was sentenced to three years supervised probation. On December 10, 2003, COLE pled guilty again in Calcasieu Parish to possession of CDS II and was sentenced to one year in the parish jail and three years supervised probation.

In February 2004, drug enforcement detectives of the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office found COLE to be in possession of a loaded Lorcin .25 caliber semi-automatic handgun. Federal law prohibits persons with felony violations from possessing a firearm and/or ammunition.

This case was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide program begun in 2001, and designed to reduce violence in our communities by aggressively using existing federal firearms laws. United States Attorneys, District Attorneys, Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, and state officials have created partnerships to address crimes involving firearms. Generally, any arrest

involving a firearm is reviewed immediately by local, state and federal authorities to decide whether the case is best suited for prosecution under state or federal law, or a combination of both.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is expected to lead to longer prison terms for violent criminals, and a significant reduction in violent crime. To date, federal prosecutions under Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Western District of Louisiana have led to the incarceration of criminals responsible for violent crimes such as homicides, aggravated assaults, robbery, car jacking, burglary, and drug trafficking.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission may only be used as guidelines by the judge. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This investigation was conducted by the Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office Drug Enforcement Team and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kelly P. Uebinger.

For further information, please contact United States Attorney Donald W. Washington at 337-262-6618 or First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Flanagan at 318-676-3600.

This and other press releases issued by the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana can be found at our website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/law.

#