



For Immediate Release

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LIFE SENTENCE IMPOSED IN FEDERAL DRUG AND FIREARM CASE

Portland, Maine: United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency Director Roy McKinney and Resident Agent-In-Charge David Brown of the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives announced that **Ricardo Pierre-Louis**, age 29 formerly of Sanford, Maine, received a life sentence today in the United States District Court in Portland. Pierre-Louis was convicted following a jury trial last November for his role as the leader of a crack cocaine trafficking organization that was operating in Sanford, Maine from 2002 until 2004. Two other individuals, Anthony Day, age 20 and Jestina Weems, age 19, were tried along with Pierre-Louis and were also found guilty. In earlier sentencing hearings, they received sentences of 13 years and 5 years respectively. Justin Brooks, age 20, who pleaded guilty to related charges, received a 10-year sentence. Three other participants in the drug ring have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

According to evidence introduced at trial, beginning in approximately late 2002 and continuing into 2004, Pierre-Louis regularly cooked powder cocaine that he obtained from Massachusetts into crack cocaine for distribution in the Sanford, Maine area. Once the crack was sold, the proceeds would be given to Pierre-Louis. The evidence further showed that Jestina Weems acted as a runner for Pierre-Louis, traveling to Massachusetts and bringing the drug back to Pierre-Louis in Maine. The trial evidence also showed that Pierre-Louis and others members of this conspiracy regularly carried handguns and exhibited violence towards rival drug dealers and indebted customers.

According to United States Attorney Silsby, agents of the Bureau of ATF and the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency worked together as the lead investigators in the case. They were assisted by officers of the Sanford, Maine Police Department, the Maine State Police, the Rochester, New Hampshire Police Department and the Farmington, New Hampshire Police Department. Mr. Brown of ATF stated: "The investigation leading to today's sentence reflects ATF's commitment to work closely with state and local agencies. ATF and our state and law enforcement partners are committed to using all available resources to vigorously investigate and prosecute individuals who use firearms in connection with drug trafficking."

The court's sentence, which was imposed by United States District Judge George Z. Singal, follows the Supreme Court's recent widely discussed opinion in *United States v. Booker*, which was decided on January 12, 2005. *Booker* affects application of the federal sentencing guidelines. The Supreme Court held in that case that the federal sentencing guidelines are no longer mandatory but that trial courts are required to consider their provisions when imposing sentence. *Booker* permits sentencing courts to tailor the sentence in light of other statutory concerns as well as the guidelines. Consistent with *Booker*, Judge Singal imposed a sentence on Pierre-Louis that was in keeping with the federal sentencing guidelines as well as the applicable statutory requirement of a life sentence.

United States Attorney Silsby stated: "The sentence that the court imposed is fitting given the extent of Mr. Pierre-Louis' drug trafficking, the violence that was associated with it and the seriousness of his criminal record. Today's sentence is the latest in a series of post-Booker cases in which federal judges have imposed harsh sentences on drug traffickers. Although Ricardo Pierre-Louis faced a mandatory life sentence by statute, other recent cases have demonstrated that the federal sentencing guidelines continue to be a vital part of the federal criminal justice system."