



NEWS RELEASE

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URBANCREST MAN RECEIVES 30-YEAR SENTENCE FOR GUN, DRUG CRIMES

Case resulted from Violent Crime Impact Team efforts

COLUMBUS, OH – Michael Lawrence Burgess, age 39, of Urbancrest was sentenced in United States District Court here today to 30 years in federal prison following his conviction on gun and drug crimes.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Christopher P. Sadowski, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); and Columbus Police Chief James G. Jackson announced the sentence handed down today by United States District Judge Gregory Frost.

A United States District Court jury convicted Burgess following a three-day trial on March 16, 2005 of three counts possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine, one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm, and one count of possession of a firearm in a drug crime.

Judge Frost sentenced Burgess to 300 months for possession with intent to distribute more than five grams of crack cocaine, 240 months for each of two counts of possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine, and 120 months for one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Those sentences will run concurrently. Burgess was sentenced to an additional five years for possession of a firearm in commission of a drug crime.

Burgess was sentenced as a career offender because he had two prior violent felony convictions then committed a drug crime.

Columbus Police officers and ATF agents arrested Burgess on the west side of Columbus on September 14, 2004, after the federal grand jury returned an Indictment. Burgess has been in custody since his arrest.

“This case shows that federal gun crime laws can hit hard, even if the criminal never pulls the trigger,” Lockhart said. “Gun crime equals hard time for the criminal, his family, the victim and the community.”

“This should send a strong message to others who may commit violent crimes that such crimes will be punished harshly,” Chief Jackson said.

“Today the court spoke on behalf of all victims of gun and drug crimes in our city by sentencing Burgess to 30 years in prison”, said Chris Sadowski of ATF.” He’ll serve his time in Federal prison where there is no probation or parole. Our time has been well spent.”

The case is part of a nationwide initiative by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to reduce violent crimes in communities through Violent Crime Impact Teams (VCIT). The goal of the teams is to identify and arrest the most violent offenders in the city.

Other agencies participating in the VCIT program include Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes's Office, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation in Attorney General Jim Petro's Office, and the Ohio Adult Parole Authority.

The Columbus VCIT effort began in June 2004 with a focus on removing crime guns from the streets. Teams of law enforcement officers, federal and state prosecutors meet regularly to review cases involving firearms. Decisions are made jointly on whether to prosecute a criminal through the state or federal system, depending on the evidence and on which system could provide the harsher punishment.

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Source: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) & US Attorney, Southern District of Ohio

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