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CUMBERLAND HOME INVADER SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS IN PRISON

Baltimore, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Richard D. Bennett sentenced Danny Jones, age 25, of Petersburg, Virginia, today to 20 years in prison followed by five years of supervised release for conspiracy to commit an armed commercial robbery and committing such a robbery; conspiracy to possess and possession of firearms in furtherance of a crime of violence, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Jones' federal sentence is to be served consecutively to his 20 year state sentence for a violation of probation, based on this conviction.

According to the evidence presented at their four day trial, Jones, Ray Blanks and others conspired to rob a known drug dealer in Cumberland, Maryland. On June 24, 2008, Jones and Blanks drove from Petersburg, Virginia to a home in Cumberland. On June 25, 2008, one of the residents in the home was sleeping in a back bedroom and was awakened by Blanks tapping a gun on his chest. Blanks and Jones, who was also armed, demanded to know where the money and drugs were kept and asked for the drug dealer, who also lived at that residence. They took the resident at gunpoint to look for money and drugs in several rooms, finally forcing the resident to lie face down on the floor. According to trial testimony, a female resident of the home returned and was accosted by Jones and Blanks. Jones had put on a ski mask to conceal his face. The two men demanded money and drugs, finally taking a roll of 19 \$2 bills from the woman's bedroom and taking cocaine and cash that they found on the woman. The two demanded that the woman call the drug dealer, who was her boyfriend, and tell him to come home. Witnesses testified that the man returned to the home at about 7 a.m. and was pistol whipped by Jones and Blanks, who again demanded money and drugs. The drug dealer was able to retrieve his hand gun and fired two shots at Jones and Blanks inside the house, as they fled out the back door. Jones and Blanks ran as the drug dealer followed them outside, continuing to fire his gun, striking Jones in the leg and buttocks, with that bullet eventually passing to his abdomen. Jones and Blanks fled in a waiting car, with a third man.

According to trial testimony, the car was subsequently stopped by law enforcement and Jones, Blanks and the third man were arrested. Blanks was searched and police recovered the cocaine and cash taken from the woman resident of the house and the 19 \$2 bills taken from the woman's bedroom. Police also saw in plain view in the car, the ski mask, later identified as the one worn by Jones, and a pair of brown cloth gloves.

On November 19, 2009, Judge Bennett sentenced Ray Blanks, age 29, also of Petersburg, Virginia, to 20 years in prison for conspiring to commit and committing the armed robbery; conspiring to and possessing firearms in furtherance of a crime of violence; and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Allegany Combined County Criminal Investigations (C3I), Allegany County Bureau of Police, Cumberland Police Department and Maryland State Police for their assistance in the investigation and prosecution. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys A. David Copperthite and Peter M. Nothstein, who prosecuted the case.