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**RAP ARTIST SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS FOR CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE
CRACK COCAINE IN BALTIMORE AREA**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Rod J. Rosenstein, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announces that today U.S. District Court Judge Marvin J. Garbis sentenced Derrick Lenwood Powell, age 21, of Woodlawn, Maryland to 10 years in prison followed by five years of supervised release in connection with his February 17, 2004 conviction by a federal jury of conspiring to distribute crack cocaine.

Trial evidence showed that from September 2002 to July 2003, Powell and co-defendants Gregory Lamont Wilson, age 30, of Catonsville, Maryland, William Franco Heggins, age 24, of Pikesville, Maryland, and Edwin Murray, age 22, of Cockeysville, Maryland operated a crack distribution network based in the Randallstown area of Baltimore County from which they distributed crack cocaine to individuals throughout the Baltimore metropolitan area. The defendants obtained raw cocaine from various suppliers including Andre Clark, age 36, of Catonsville, Maryland who would transport it from Morrow, Georgia. Clark pleaded guilty on November 12, 2003 to conspiracy to distribute cocaine after he was arrested by Maryland State Police on the Baltimore Washington Parkway on May 23, 2003 with a kilogram of cocaine in his vehicle.

According to trial evidence, the defendants used various apartments and homes in Howard County, Baltimore County and Baltimore City as "drug houses" where they would store the cocaine and convert it into crack cocaine. The conspiracy involved the retail distribution of more than 25 kilograms of crack cocaine.

Also according to trial evidence, Murray, Wilson and Powell used the proceeds from their illegal distribution scheme to start and maintain a record company called Big Business Records,

LLC, a company incorporated in Maryland and listed in Woodlawn, Maryland. During the period of the conspiracy, the defendants promoted and organized a concert on June 7, 2003 at the Five Seasons, located at 322 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland. The concert featured Powell as a rap performer under the name "D-Rack." According to intercepted telephone calls played in court, Powell and the other defendants provided their own security for the concert by placing firearms in vehicles leased for the occasion. Also, according to evidence presented in court, Powell would perform rap songs he wrote about the business of trafficking in illegal drugs.

On April 12, 2005 Judge Garbis sentenced Wilson to 25 years in prison followed by 10 years of supervised release. On May 10, 2005 Judge Garbis sentenced Murray to 25 years in prison followed by 5 years of supervised release. No date has been scheduled for the sentencing of Heggins.

The case is the result of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force investigation by the Baltimore County Police Department in conjunction with the Maryland State Police, Baltimore City Police Department, Howard County Police Department, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Martin Clarke and Charles Peters.