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CONVICTED DRUG DEALER SENTENCED TO TWENTY YEARS

BALTIMORE, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein announces that today U.S. District Court Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced Ernest Roberts, age 34, of Westminster, Maryland to twenty years in prison followed by five years of supervised release in connection with his conviction on June 13, 2005 by a federal jury of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine powder, crack cocaine and heroin between 1992 and 2002, and conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute marijuana between 1998 and 2003.

According to evidence presented at trial, between 1992 and 2002, Mr. Roberts managed a drug trafficking organization in the area of Edmondson and Mount Streets, on Baltimore's west side. During this period, his organization distributed large quantities of crack cocaine, cocaine powder and heroin worth millions of dollars. He supervised a network of drug dealers who packaged wholesale quantities of drugs into user quantities, stored the drugs in various stash-houses in the area, and distributed the drugs on the street.

The evidence at trial also showed that between 1998 and 2003, Mr. Roberts served as a trusted advisor to convicted drug dealer Tyree Stewart, age 31, who managed an organization that distributed a high-quality form of marijuana known as "Arizona" through various markets or "shops" located in the 1800 and 1900 block of West Lanvale Street, the corner of Edmondson and Fulton Avenues, and the 700 block of Kirby Lane. Workers at these shops packaged marijuana for retail sale and distributed that marijuana from a residence, business, or nearby street location.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Baltimore City Police Department for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorneys Paul Tiao, Andrea Smith and Jason Weinstein, who prosecuted the case.