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**EAST BALTIMORE MAN CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE DRUGS
AND POSSESSION OF FIREARMS IN FURTHERANCE OF DRUG TRAFFICKING**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein announces that yesterday James Dana Sweets, 30, of Baltimore was convicted following a three-day jury trial of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute controlled substances, and conspiracy to possess firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking.

According to the facts presented during the trial, from 2000 to May of 2004 Sweets conspired with John Long, age 25, Charles Garrison, age 36, Maurice Green, age 23, all of Baltimore, and others to distribute crack cocaine, heroin, powder cocaine and other controlled substances from various locations, including 7 South Broadway, Baltimore. After that location was raided by law enforcement officials in April 2004, Sweets and others moved their drug operations to the Homestead Suites Hotel in Germantown, Maryland. There they continued to package, store, and sell large quantities of crack cocaine and marijuana. Sweets and others also possessed a wide array of firearms used to protect their drug stash and cash proceeds. Some of these firearms included an Intratec 9mm laser-guided pistol, Norico SKS rifle, and several 40 caliber and 9 mm guns. In addition, Sweets and his co-conspirators participated in several robberies, shootings and other drug-related crimes of violence in Baltimore.

Sweets faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment with a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years, a fine of \$8 million, and 10 years supervised release for the drug conspiracy conviction. For the gun conspiracy conviction, Sweets faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine and three years supervised release. U.S. District Court Judge Catherine C. Blake has scheduled sentencing for December 21, 2005 at 9:15 a.m. Sweets is detained pending his sentencing.

Co-defendants John Long, Charles Garrison, and Maurice Green pled guilty before trial, and are expected to be sentenced in the coming months.

United States Attorney Rosenstein thanked the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Baltimore City Police Department for their investigation, and expressed his appreciation to the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, which originally handled the case before it was referred for federal prosecution. Mr. Rosenstein praised Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kwame J. Manley and Robert Harding, who prosecuted the case.