

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2003

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ARYAN BROTHERHOOD MEMBER FOUND GUILTY ON GUN CHARGE - FACES 15 YEARS TO LIFE IN PRISON

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on March 21, 2003, Mark Louis Sandon, born November 5, 1954, of Phoenix, Arizona, was found guilty of the federal crime Felon in Possession of a Firearm, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1), by a federal jury at Phoenix, Arizona. This was Sandon's eleventh felony conviction.

The evidence at trial showed that Sandon was arrested on January 3, 2001 by Phoenix Police. Officers found a .40 caliber Smith and Wesson pistol in the Mitsubishi Montero Sandon was driving and in which he was the sole occupant. He was originally charged by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office on state charges, but those charges were dismissed when a friend of Sandon's came forward, claimed ownership of both the Montero and the gun, and told a Deputy County Attorney that Sandon was not aware the gun was in the vehicle. This witness later agreed to

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cooperate with federal authorities and testified at trial that in fact Sandon had knowingly borrowed the gun and the vehicle early on the morning of his arrest, and that Sandon had said as he left the witness's apartment, with the keys to the Montero and the gun, "I'm taking the .40." Introduced at trial were two letters that Sandon had written to the witness instructing him what to say to authorities on Sandon's behalf. A handwriting expert testified at trial that these letters were indeed written by Sandon.

The defendant is a documented member of the Aryan Brotherhood and has an extensive criminal history. As a result of his prior criminal history, he faces a minimum sentence of 15 years imprisonment. He was prosecuted as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a program designed by the United States Attorney's Office to target gun crime. The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Roger G. Strand March 18th through March 21st. The defendant will be sentenced on June 2nd. The defendant is facing a mandatory minimum of 15 years to life incarceration and a \$250,000 fine.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by Special Agents Athanasio ("Tom") Vlahoulis and Jose Wall of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The prosecution is being handled by Mary Beth Phillips, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER : CR-02-1224-PHX-RGS
RELEASE NUMBER : 2003-038

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