



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

November 20, 2003

TITUSVILLE MAN WITH GUN AND MARIHUANA
SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

ORLANDO - U.S. District Judge Anne C. Conway today sentenced **ERIC BERNARD MARTIN**, 21, of Titusville, to five years' imprisonment for carrying a firearm during a drug trafficking crime. In addition to his prison term, Martin will have to serve four years on supervised release, perform 150 hours of community service and pay a \$100 special assessment. Martin previously had pled guilty to the charge on September 4, 2003.

According to the facts established at sentencing, the Titusville Police Department obtained a search warrant for Martin's apartment on August 28, 2002. The warrant detailed numerous complaints that had been received from the apartment complex regarding drug sales by Martin. When Martin saw the officers at the apartment, he dropped a shoebox containing two large bags of marihuana, a loaded .25 caliber pistol, and a plastic bag with ammunition. Inside of Martin's residence, officers recovered additional amounts of marihuana and drug paraphernalia. The marihuana was packaged for distribution.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"), and the Titusville Police Department. It is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from ATF. United States Attorney Paul I. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials and calling our effort "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!" The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr. and Special Assistant United States Attorney Gregory Konieczka.

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