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**DRUG DEALER SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR  
POSSESSING A GUN**

*Greenbelt*, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte sentenced Kenneth Lee Gardner, age 26, of Germantown, Maryland today to 15 years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for being a felon in possession of a firearm, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Judge Messitte enhanced Gardner's sentence upon finding that he is an armed career criminal based on Gardner's previous convictions for a serious drug offense and violent felonies.

According to his plea agreement, on March 1, 2006, a Montgomery County police officer stopped a Chevy Blazer on Crystal Rock Drive after observing a flash of light and hearing a small pop, which came from the vehicle. Gardner was arrested after the police officer observed two firearms in the vehicle near where he had been sitting – a Taurus 9mm handgun and a Beretta .22 caliber pistol – as well as ammunition for the Taurus. The officer also seized a bag containing approximately 41 grams of crack cocaine from Gardner at the time of his arrest.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Montgomery County Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for their investigative work, and commended Assistant United States Attorney Emily Glatfelter, who prosecuted the case.