



Department of Justice

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ARMED DRUG DEALER WHO FIRED AT ATF AGENTS CONVICTED BY JURY ON MULTIPLE CHARGES

Atlanta, GA – After a 5-day trial, CHARDRIQUEZ ANTUAN DURDEN, 24, of Lithonia, Georgia, was convicted by a federal jury this afternoon on charges of assaulting seven federal agents; discharging a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence; possession with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base (crack); possession with intent to distribute marijuana; possession of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking, and aiding and abetting the making of false statements to a federally licensed gun dealer.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, “This case illustrates the danger that law enforcement officers constantly face as they perform their duties. Durden was convicted of a domestic crime of violence and then illegally acquired a firearm by furnishing money to a straw purchaser. That gun was used to fire upon ATF agents and local police who were executing a search warrant to find that very gun. The jury’s verdict ensures that Durden will now pay a heavy price for his crimes. I am thankful for the verdict and that none of the agents and officers was killed.”

ATF Acting Special Agent In Charge Scott Sweetow said, “Every ATF agent knows and accepts the fact that we have to come face-to-face with violent crime. Mr. Durden represents the violent underbelly of straw purchasing, a key method by which criminals acquire firearms. The criminal element is prohibited from possessing guns for a reason, and Mr. Durden illustrates why. With bullets flying, our agents and the DeKalb police officers showed incredible courage under fire. I am deeply proud of their actions.”

According to Nahmias and the evidence presented in court: On October 31, 2005, and June 20, 2006, DURDEN’s girlfriend purchased two guns, a Taurus 9 mm caliber pistol and a Taurus .45 caliber pistol, from a licensed gun dealer in Conyers. The girlfriend, who later testified at trial against DURDEN, had falsely represented on the firearms transaction form that she was the true purchaser, when in fact she was purchasing the weapons for DURDEN. The Taurus 9mm pistol was later recovered from a drug crime scene in DeKalb County, and ATF agents tracked down his girlfriend, who had been the purchaser. Upon further investigation, ATF determined that DURDEN was in possession of the other gun. DURDEN was prohibited from possessing a weapon

because of a prior criminal record, having been convicted of domestic violence.

On December 15, 2006, when federal agents and local police attempted to execute a federal search warrant at DURDEN's apartment, DURDEN opened fire at the officers, striking one ATF agent in the abdomen and barely missing another ATF agent in the head. ATF agents returned fire and then successfully negotiated his surrender. The subsequent search showed that DURDEN's apartment was equipped with a surveillance camera that allowed him to see the agents and the marked police cars as they approached the apartment. A search of DURDEN's room in the apartment turned up the .45 caliber Taurus firearm which DURDEN had used to shoot at the agents.

A further search of the apartment resulted in the recovery of a second firearm, crack cocaine, powder cocaine, and marijuana which had a combined street value of approximately \$4,000. Police also found drug scales, drug packaging materials and other evidence of drug distribution. In a separate bedroom occupied by DURDEN's friend PAUL ANDREW THOMPSON, 21, of Lithonia, Georgia, police found another handgun, a small quantity of crack cocaine and marijuana. THOMPSON was convicted of related crimes and on September 12, 2007, United States District Court Judge J. Owen Forrester sentenced THOMPSON to 1 year, 6 months in federal prison.

The date for DURDEN's sentencing has not yet been set by the court. He faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 35 years in federal prison.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearm and Explosives (ATF) and the DeKalb County Police Department, with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Assistant United States Attorneys Zahra S. Karinshak and Joseph Plummer are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH meus), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581 6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.