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JURY CONVICTS ORLANDO FELON OF SHOOTING AT POLICE HELICOPTER IN SECOND TRIAL

Orlando, Florida - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that a federal jury today found Jason Dennis McGuire (age 26, of Orlando) guilty of attempted destruction of an aircraft and using or carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. McGuire faces a minimum penalty of ten years in federal prison and a maximum penalty of life in federal prison. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for April 24, 2011.

McGuire was indicted on July 22, 2010 for three counts of federal criminal law violations: (1) attempted destruction of an aircraft, (2) using or carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence, and (3) felon in possession of a firearm. McGuire was tried and found guilty of these charges on November 12, 2010. The jury's verdict was later vacated and the Honorable Gregory A. Presnell ordered a re-trial. McGuire subsequently pled guilty to the felon in possession of a firearm count on December 21, 2010 before the Honorable David A. Baker and was subsequently convicted of the remaining charges during the retrial. According to testimony presented at the re-trial, deputies from the Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) responded to an early-morning 911 emergency call on March 21, 2010 of shots being fired in a residential neighborhood in Orlando, Florida. As deputies investigated the call, OCSO helicopter "Chase Three" arrived on the scene to

provide aerial support. At the re-trial, deputies and neighbors testified that within moments of Chase Three's arrival, they saw McGuire shoot towards the helicopter.

McGuire took the witness stand in his re-trial and testified that he intended to commit suicide with the handgun that morning, but eventually decided not to end his life. McGuire claimed that he did not want a loaded weapon in the house, so he discharged a number of bullets into the air and a single round into a palm tree in his driveway. McGuire denied that he was shooting at Chase Three at the time. A federal jury rejected McGuire's claims and found McGuire guilty of the two remaining counts charged in the Indictment.

This is another case prosecuted as a part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" program - a nationwide, gun-violence reduction strategy led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill, along with Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge, ATF Tampa Field Division, is coordinating the Project Safe Neighborhoods effort here in the Middle District of Florida in cooperation with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials.

This case was investigated by the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, with forensic support provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel W. Eckhart.