



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill
Middle District of Florida

Tampa	Orlando	Jacksonville	Ocala	Fort Myers
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE			CONTACT: WILLIAM DANIELS	
June 14, 2011			PHONE: (813) 274-6388	
http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr			FAX: (813) 274-6300	

ARMED ROBBER SENTENCED TO LIFE

Tampa, Florida - U.S. Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces that U.S. District Judge James D. Whittemore yesterday sentenced Charles Bernard Tolson (19, Bradenton) to life in federal prison for three convenience store/gas station robberies in Tampa and Manatee County during October 2009. The Court ordered that Tolson serve 3 concurrent 125 month sentences for each robbery, and consecutive to that, to serve 3 concurrent life sentences for brandishing a firearm during each robbery. Tolson was also ordered to make restitution to each of his victims totaling \$2,414.60.

Tolson was indicted on July 22, 2010, and tried before a jury in Tampa in a four-day trial in early February. The testimony and evidence presented at trial established that Tolson and Lashay Theodora Cooper robbed a Circle K / Shell station located at 5100 East Adamo Drive in Hillsborough County, then drove to Manatee County where, approximately 45 minutes later, they robbed Uppy's BP station located on U.S. 41 North in Palmetto. During the Uppy's robbery, Tolson attempted to shoot the clerk on two occasions because she could not open the cash register. The gun misfired. Tolson then handed the gun to Cooper, who was behind the counter, and directed him to shoot or hit the clerk. Cooper pistol whipped her, causing a severe gash on top of her head. From this armed robbery, Tolson and Cooper stole one or two cartons of cigarettes.

Two days later, Tolson and Cooper robbed a Chevron gas station located on State Road 70 East in Bradenton. Similar to the other robberies, Tolson pointed a handgun at the store clerk and demanded money, while Cooper walked around the back of the checkout counter and emptied the cash registers.

Judge Whittemore recently sentenced Cooper to 50 years in prison, to be served consecutively to a 7 year Florida prison sentence he is currently serving.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Tampa Police Department, and the Manatee County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Simon Gaugush and Walter E. Furr, III.