



U.S. Department of Justice

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ROCKFORD MAN SENTENCED TO 6 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON WITHOUT PAROLE FOR ILLEGALLY SELLING FIREARMS

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and JOSEPH BRUSCATO, Winnebago County State's Attorney, ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosive, RICHARD A. MEYERS, Winnebago County Sheriff, and CHET EPPERSON, Rockford Police Deputy Chief, today made the following announcement:

Today, in Rockford Federal Court, United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard sentenced **DERELL C. VALENTINE**, 25, of Rockford, to 6 years in prison, for illegally selling nine firearms at a storefront operation located on Broadway in Rockford. There is no parole under federal law. Valentine was charged by a federal grand jury on February 9, 2010, with engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license, selling firearms to an individual (the manager of the storefront) whom Valentine knew and had reason to believe was a felon, being a felon in possession of firearms, and possession of sawed-off shotguns.

The charges stemmed from a law enforcement operation that began in April 2009 and continued to October 2009. During that time, managers of the storefront operation purchased more than 50 firearms, including a dozen sawed-off shotguns, most of them sold illegally either by individuals who were previously convicted felons or by individuals who knew they were selling firearms to convicted felons. During the operation of the storefront, local, state and federal law enforcement authorities secretly recorded individuals as they used the back room of the storefront to illegally sell firearms and narcotic drugs.

The probe culminated on February 11, 2010, with the arrests of Valentine and other defendants indicted on state and federal charges. Eight Rockford residents were indicted on federal firearms or drug trafficking charges and 10 others were charged with state crimes.

Valentine pleaded guilty on July 19, 2010, to illegally engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a license and to possessing an unregistered sawed-off shotgun. In the plea agreement, Valentine also admitted that he possessed the nine firearms while a

convicted felon, to selling the nine firearms to a person the defendant knew and had reasonable cause to believe was also a convicted felon, and that three of the nine firearms were unregistered sawed-off shotguns.

In addition to the 6 year prison sentence, Valentine was ordered to serve 3 years of supervised release following his release from prison. The court also ordered Valentine to repay to the United States the \$4,800 the government used in purchasing the firearms from Valentine during the investigation.

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the ATF, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, and the Rockford Police Department. The case was prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney JOHN G. MCKENZIE.

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