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News Release

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Minneapolis man pleads guilty to possessing crack cocaine

A 28-year-old Minneapolis man pleaded guilty today in federal court for possessing with intent to distribute cocaine base, commonly known as crack cocaine.

Dantzer Lement Thomas pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute cocaine base. He entered his plea on Oct. 14 in Minneapolis before United States District Court Judge John Tunheim. Thomas was indicted on May 20.

According to his plea agreement, Thomas, a confirmed Gangster Disciples gang member, admitted that on April 30, 2008, he knowingly and unlawfully possessed with intent to distribute between 50 and 150 grams of cocaine base. Thomas also admitted that he possessed a semi-automatic handgun in connection with the drug-trafficking activity.

According to a Minnesota State Gang Strike Force affidavit, authorities learned in April 2008 that narcotics and handguns were being stored at a residence in the 2400 block of 15th Avenue in Minneapolis, and that a man trafficked crack cocaine there.

On April 30, police observed Thomas arrive at the residence, retrieve a white bag from the vehicle's trunk, enter the residence, and then leave a short time later. When he left the residence, the affidavit states, Thomas was no longer in possession of the white bag.

Minutes after Thomas left, police executed a search warrant on the residence and found the white bag hidden in the basement ceiling. Inside, officers found a loaded .45-caliber semi-automatic handgun and more than 100 grams of crack cocaine. When Thomas was later arrested, officers found a house key for the residence in his possession.

Thomas faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years in prison and a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. Judge Tunheim will determine his sentence at a future date. This case is the result of an investigation by the Minnesota State Gang Strike Force, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and the Minneapolis Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew R. Winter.

