

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 23, 2009

Pleasantville Man Pleads Guilty to Distribution of Crack Cocaine and
Possession of a Handgun by a Previously Convicted Felon

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Pleasantville man pleaded guilty to federal drug and gun charges today for distributing approximately 218.5 grams of crack cocaine and being a previously convicted felon in possession of handgun, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

Jason Emanuel Smart-El, 37, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Noel L. Hillman to a two-count Superseding Information that charges him with one count each of distribution of five grams or more of crack cocaine and possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon. Judge Hillman continued the defendant's detention and scheduled sentencing for Jan. 6.

At his plea hearing, Smart-El admitted that from September 2007 until November 2007, he participated in the sale of crack cocaine in and around Atlantic County. Smart-El admitted that on four separate occasions he sold quantities of crack cocaine, totaling approximately 218.5 grams, to a person he later learned to be a confidential informant for law enforcement.

Smart-El also agreed that on Nov. 15, 2007, upon the execution of a search warrant, law enforcement officers found approximately 41 grams of cocaine hydrochloride and a .22 caliber magnum revolver in his residence. Smart-El admitted that the drugs and gun found during the search belonged to him.

Smart-El was then arrested on state charges Nov. 15, following the execution of the search warrant. The charges were adopted for federal prosecution.

The charge of distribution of five or more grams of crack cocaine carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years in prison and a statutory maximum penalty of 40 years in prison, and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Hillman will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents of the FBI's Atlantic City Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, the DEA's Atlantic City Resident

Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer, Investigators with the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Theodore F.L. Housel, and Police Officers with the Police Departments of Pleasantville and Atlantic City, under the direction of Chief Duane N. Comeaux and Chief John J. Mooney, respectively, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Smith of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Christopher O'Malley, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender