

NEWS

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More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Newark Man Once Suspected in Church Lot Murders
Sentenced to Maximum 10 Years on Federal Weapons Charges

(More)

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NEWARK – A Newark man once suspected of involvement in the murder of four people in a vacant lot behind a church in 2004 was sentenced today to the maximum 10 years in federal prison for being a felon in possession of firearms, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

U.S. District Judge Faith S. Hochberg also ordered Michael Melvin, 29, to pay a \$10,000 fine. Melvin awaits sentencing in Essex County Superior Court, where he pleaded guilty in October 2007 to aggravated manslaughter for the shooting of Lamar McMillan, separate from the church lot murders.

In September 2005, an Essex County crime task force investigating the church lot murders executed an arrest warrant for Melvin and, in the process, discovered two illegal handguns, one with a 30-round ammunition cartridge. Melvin was charged federally two months later with being a previously convicted felon in possession of firearms.

Although eventually indicted for the church lot murders, the indictment was subsequently dismissed in state court. Melvin was indicted and did plead guilty to the McMillan homicide in state court.

“Melvin received the maximum sentence available under federal law,” Marra said. “To the extent we could bring federal gun charges to bear against Melvin, we are pleased to have done our part in prosecuting this very dangerous individual.”

Melvin was first charged federally on Nov. 4, 2005, and indicted on Jan. 13, 2006, on the felon in possession charge. He pleaded guilty to the charge, with no plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney’s Office, on March 12, 2007.

Judge Hochberg said she would issue a fuller opinion on the federal sentence sometime this week.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph R. Gribko.

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Defense Council: David Holman, Esq., Federal Public Defender’s Office, Newark