



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney Eastern District of Arkansas

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PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS CASE RESULTS IN STIFF SENTENCES FOR FORREST CITY ARMED ROBBERS

Little Rock – Bud Cummins, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced today that Cecil Ray Aldridge, age 25, and Dewayne Laverdo Hamilton, age 27, both of Forrest City, Arkansas were sentenced for their roles in a conspiracy to commit the armed robbery of the East Central Arkansas Insurance, Incorporated, an independent insurance agency located in Forrest City, Arkansas on April 26, 2005. Both men also pled guilty to conspiracy to use and brandish firearms during a crime of violence, and to each being convicted felons in possession of firearms before U.S. District Judge James M. Moody, Jr. in Little Rock.

Today, Judge Moody sentenced Aldridge to a term of 131 months imprisonment with an additional seven years to be served consecutively for use of a firearm during the robbery. Aldridge has previously been convicted of two counts of residential burglary, felony criminal mischief in the first degree, felony sexual assault in the second degree and being a felon in possession of firearms in Arkansas state court proceedings in the past.

On Tuesday, June 19, 2006, District Judge Moody sentenced Hamilton to a total of 133 months imprisonment without parole for his role in these crimes. A 7-year term of imprisonment to be served consecutively to the imprisonment for the robbery offense was imposed for Hamilton's brandishing of a firearm during this robbery. Hamilton, a two-time convicted felon, has previously been convicted of Murder and Possession of Firearm by a Convicted Felon in Arkansas state court proceedings.

According to the Indictment and proceedings in this case, on April 26, 2005, Hamilton and Aldridge robbed the employees of East Central Arkansas Insurance, Inc. while armed with firearms. The firearms utilized in this robbery were a 9 millimeter pistol and a .25 caliber pistol. Hamilton and Aldridge were located by Forrest City Police Department Officers hiding in a

nearby residence shortly after the robbery. Currency and property belonging to the Insurance Agency, as well as personal belongings of the victims were recovered from the residence.

This case is designated a Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) case. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a federal initiative aimed at reducing gun crime by networking local prosecutors and law enforcement with federal counterparts. Those prosecuted under federal statutes serve longer sentences partly due to the fact that there is no parole in the federal system.

“Here’s an example of two young men who have virtually thrown their lives away because they either hadn’t heard about Project Safe Neighborhoods, or just didn’t believe we are serious about harsh punishment of criminals who commit gun crimes,” stated Cummins. “Forrest City Police and federal agents cooperated extremely well in this case and this is an outstanding result for the community.”

The indictment is the result of an investigation conducted jointly by the Forrest City Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Little Rock, Arkansas. Senior Litigation Counsel Kevin Alexander represented the United States in this prosecution.

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For more information on Project Safe Neighborhoods visit www.psn.gov.