



**U.S. Department of Justice**

***United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Arkansas***

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**TUCKERMAN RESIDENT SENTENCED FOR  
THREATENING TO SHOOT A FISH & WILDLIFE OFFICER**

**Little Rock** – Jane W. Duke, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, announced that Gerald Dean Burgess, age 62, of Tuckerman, Arkansas, was sentenced Friday to 2 years probation and ordered to pay a \$20,000 fine for threatening to shoot a United States Fish and Wildlife officer with a shotgun.

On February 3, 2007, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Officer Vic Coffman was on boat patrol on the Cache River when he decided to conduct a routine check of fishing licenses for Burgess and another individual with whom Burgess was fishing. Officer Coffman navigated his vessel up to Burgess' pontoon boat and secured the two boats. Immediately thereafter, Burgess pointed a rifle muzzle out of the pontoon boat window and fired a shot. Burgess then came out of the boat brandishing a shotgun and threatened to shoot Officer Coffman if he did not leave immediately. Burgess was ultimately indicted for one count of assaulting a federal officer. On November 15, 2007, Burgess entered a plea of guilty to that charge before Chief United States District Judge J. Leon Holmes.

Duke stated, "Our office takes all threats and assaults to federal law enforcement officers very seriously. This case should send an unequivocal message that we will prosecute any such case to the fullest extent of the law." She added, "The imposition of such a hefty fine against Mr. Burgess clearly signifies that the courts also take these matters seriously."

This case was investigated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John Ray White.

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