



Department of Justice

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DURDEN SENTENCED TO OVER 43 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SHOOTING AT ATF AGENTS

Atlanta, GA - CHARDRIQUEZ DURDEN, 24, of Lithonia, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge J. Owen Forrester on charges of assaulting federal agents with a firearm; making false statements to a federal licensed firearms dealer in order to straw purchase a firearm; possession of cocaine, cocaine base and marijuana with intent to distribute; and possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "Durden needed guns to protect his illegal drug dealing business. He was on probation for a domestic violence conviction and was prohibited from possessing firearms by both federal law and the terms of his probation, so he violated another federal law by having his girlfriend straw-purchase guns for him. When ATF agents were attempting to execute a search warrant on his apartment to recover the guns, Durden committed his most serious crime - he shot at the federal agents, hitting one of them and nearly hitting another, although thankfully not killing anyone. We have absolutely no tolerance for criminals who violently resist law enforcement, and Durden's 43-year sentence is just punishment for his incredibly dangerous and lawless conduct."

"ATF agents deal with violent, armed predators on a daily basis - that's what we do - but rarely do we meet criminals as depraved as this one, who have so little regard for the law that they start shooting wildly at federal agents," said ATF Acting Special Agent in Charge Scott Sweetow. "This investigation and trial accurately paint Chardriquez Durden as a violent dope dealer who, but for the training and protective equipment of our brave agents, could well be facing murder charges. He is well deserving of several decades behind bars."

DURDEN was sentenced to 43 years, 1 month in prison to be followed by 5 years of supervised release. DURDEN was convicted of these charges on January 18, 2008, after a jury trial.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented at trial: Beginning on October 31, 2005, DURDEN caused his girlfriend to purchase two weapons, a Taurus 9 mm caliber pistol and a Taurus .45 caliber pistol, from a pawn shop that has a federal firearms license in Conyers, Georgia. DURDEN's girlfriend falsely represented on the required firearms transaction form that she was the true purchaser, when in fact she was purchasing the weapons for DURDEN.

In December 2006, ATF recovered one firearm from a crime scene, and subsequently interviewed DURDEN's girlfriend. She agreed to cooperate and made a tape-recorded phone call to DURDEN. During this conversation, DURDEN admitted that he still possessed in his apartment one of the guns purchased by his girlfriend.

On December 15, 2006, when federal agents attempted to execute a federal search warrant at DURDEN's apartment, DURDEN fired three shots at agents through his apartment door, hitting and wounding one ATF agent and narrowly missing another agent. DURDEN's apartment was equipped with a surveillance camera that allowed him to see the agents and the marked police cars as they approached the apartment. A guest in DURDEN's apartment, Paul Thompson, acknowledged that he saw the police outside and a next door neighbor indicated that he heard the ATF agents knock and announce "police with a search warrant, open up." A search of the apartment revealed one of the firearms that DURDEN's girlfriend previously straw-purchased from the pawn shop. Police also found crack cocaine, powder cocaine, scales, packaging materials, approximately \$1,000 in cash and a second firearm in the room occupied by DURDEN. In the room that was allegedly occupied by Thompson, officers found marijuana, cocaine, and another handgun. Thompson later pleaded guilty to federal drug and firearms charges.

This case was investigated by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the DeKalb County Police Department with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Georgia Bureau Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Assistant United States Attorneys Zahra Karinshak and Joseph Plummer prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.