



Department of Justice

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LANSING AREA DRUG DEALER CONVICTED, FACES LIFE SENTENCE

Faces a consecutive sentence for gun possession and for selling cocaine while on bond

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN — Otis Morris, age 60, of Lansing, Michigan was convicted by a jury of numerous drug and firearm charges today after a trial before Chief U.S. District Judge Paul L. Maloney, in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Morris, who has four previous felony drug convictions, was convicted of engaging in a conspiracy to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine in the Lansing area between August of 2010, and May 6, 2011. Testimony at trial included evidence that Morris had purchased 13 kilograms of cocaine during April and May from drug suppliers in Chicago, Illinois, and brought it back to Lansing for distribution. Morris faces a mandatory life sentence as a result of the conviction for this offense.

In addition, the evidence at trial showed that Morris was arrested by Michigan State Police near Paw Paw, Michigan, on May 6, 2011, with more than 4 kilograms of additional cocaine, some cocaine base (crack), a Jennings-Bryco 9 mm pistol and almost \$24,000 in cash. As a result, Morris was also convicted today of:

Possession with Intent to Distribute More than 500 grams of cocaine, for which he faces a mandatory prison sentence of no less than 10 years and up to life in prison, followed by a period of at least 8 years and up to life on supervised release, along with a fine of up to \$8,000,000;

Possession with intent to distribute cocaine base, for which he faces a sentence of up to thirty years' incarceration, followed by a period of at least 6 years and up to life on supervised release, along with a fine of up to \$2,000,000;

Being a felon in possession of a firearm. Because of his four prior felony drug convictions, Morris is deemed an Armed Career Criminal and faces a mandatory 15 year prison term; and

Possession of a Firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, for which he must be sentenced to a period of at least five years' incarceration which must also be served consecutively to the sentences imposed on any other charge with which he has been convicted, including the conspiracy offense.

In addition, the jury heard that Morris distributed an ounce of cocaine in Lansing on April 13, 2011. For his conviction today on that offense, he faces a sentence of up to thirty years' incarceration, followed by a period of at least 6 years and up to life on supervised release, along with a fine of up to \$2,000,000;

The jury also heard that on May 24, 2011, while Morris was on bond, Lansing Police Officers, in conjunction with members of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, arrested him for possessing several ounces of cocaine and cocaine base. Accordingly, the jury convicted him on charges of possession with intent to deliver cocaine and cocaine base on that date as well, for which he faces a consecutive sentence of up to thirty years' incarceration, followed by a period of at least 6 years and up to life on supervised release, along with a fine of up to \$2,000,000. The consecutive sentence is called for because he committed these offenses while on bond in the same federal case.

Finally, on March 31, 2011, Morris was caught in possession of a 38 caliber revolver by Michigan State Police Officers in Branch County, Michigan. Accordingly, the jury also convicted him of being a felon in possession of a firearm and as an armed career criminal. He faces a mandatory 15 year prison term at sentencing for this offense.

This case was developed by the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force of West Michigan and included efforts of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Michigan State Police, the Lansing Police Department and the Tri-County Metro Narcotics Enforcement Team. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark Courtade and Sean Maltbie.

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