



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney
Director of Community Relations
(612) 664-5611
email: jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov**

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, March 1, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN

Federal jury convicts St. Paul man of being a felon in possession of a firearm

Earlier this afternoon in federal court in Minneapolis, a jury found a 41-year-old St. Paul career criminal guilty of possessing a firearm. Following a two-day trial and two hours of deliberation, Theodore Stevie Varner was specifically convicted of one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. He was indicted on November 1, 2010.

Because Varner was previously convicted of at least one felony, he is prohibited under federal law from possessing firearms at any time. Moreover, since many of his prior felony convictions were for violent crimes or serious drug offenses, he is now subject to the federal armed career criminal statute, which mandates a minimum 15-year prison sentence for his conviction in the current case. U.S. District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen will determine his exact sentence at a hearing not yet scheduled.

According to the evidence presented at trial, Varner possessed a French-made 22-caliber pistol on September 22, 2010. On that date, a man, later identified as Varner, reportedly was seen at a St. Paul apartment complex with the weapon. When police arrived, they spotted him behind the wheel of a Ford Explorer and approached the vehicle. Varner, however, drove off, prompting a police chase. About a block away, Varner exited the car and ran down an alley, where he tripped and fell. Later, after authorities apprehended Varner, they found the gun on the ground where he had fallen.

This case was the result of an investigation by the St. Paul Police Department and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Deidre Y. Aanstad and Karen B. Schommer.

Note, this case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, an initiative launched by the U.S. Justice Department in 2001 to promote a multi-jurisdictional, comprehensive approach to reducing gun crime in America. PSN provides resources to strengthen law enforcement and

crime prevention partnerships that are working to make our streets and communities safer.

###