



U.S. Department of Justice

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February 9, 2011

HOME INVASION ROBBER CONVICTED AT TRIAL

PHILADELPHIA - Clarence Powell, 23, of Philadelphia, was convicted today by a federal jury of the home invasion robbery of two Asian business owners and their families in December 2008. Powell was convicted of conspiracy to commit robbery, two counts of Hobbs Act robbery, and two counts of using and carrying a firearm during a crime of violence. U.S. District Court Judge J. Curtis Joyner presided. Powell and his co-defendants, Michael Lassiter, and Troy Hill, followed a Philadelphia shop owner to her home in Broomall, Pennsylvania on December 1, 2008. The armed defendants tied up the shop owner and her husband, assaulted them, and stole money and other property. Prior to December 18, 2008, the defendants followed the owner of the Dollar Plus Discount store, located in Philadelphia, to his home in Upper Darby, PA. They returned on December 18, 2011 and robbed several family members. Lassiter and Powell, along with Troy Hill, were armed with handguns and a sawed off shotgun when they forced their way into the business owner's home, restrained several members of the business owner's family, stole money and other property, and escaped in a car driven by Alexis Byrd-Arroyo.

Powell, who has a prior firearm conviction, faces a mandatory 50 years in prison when sentenced May 3, 2011. He is also awaiting trial for an armed carjacking. Lassiter, Hill, and Byrd-Arroyo pleaded guilty. Hill and Lassiter will be sentenced February 23, 2011; Byrd-Arroyo will be sentenced March 16, 2011.

This investigation and prosecution is part of *Project Safe Neighborhoods*, a joint initiative by the United States Attorney's Office, each of the nine District Attorney's Offices in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to identify and prosecute dangerous firearms offenders in federal court, where the defendants are likely to receive a substantial sentence upon conviction. As an extension of Project Safe Neighborhoods, the United States Attorney's Office, FBI, ATF, Philadelphia Police Department, and other law enforcement agencies have established the *Hobbs Act Robbery Task Force* to investigate and prosecute organized gangs and groups committing commercial armed robberies in this district.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Philadelphia Police Department, the Marple Township Police Department, and the Upper Darby Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Arlene Fisk and Thomas Zaleski.

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