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CONVICTED FELON SENTENCED IN FEDERAL COURT

Boutte, a habitual offender, will serve a total of 147 months in prison

LAFAYETTE, LA . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced the sentencing of **MELVIN B. BOUTTE**, age 31, of Lake Charles, Louisiana. BOUTTE was sentenced in United States District Court for drug trafficking and firearms charges. U. S. District Judge Richard T. Haik sentenced BOUTTE to spend 60 months in federal prison to be followed by a term of four years supervised release. Judge Haik also sentenced the defendant to a mandatory five years in prison for possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, which shall run **consecutive** to previous sentences received.

The 60-month sentence handed down by U. S. District Judge Richard Haik as it pertains to Count 1 of the Indictment will run concurrent with an 87- month sentence BOUTTE previously received in the Eastern District of Texas (Beaumont) for felon in possession of a firearm. The mandatory 5-year sentence which pertains to Count 3 of the Indictment shall run consecutive to the two sentences (87-month/Beaumont and 60-month/Lafayette) BOUTTE has received.

MELVIN BOUTTE, a repeat offender, was indicted in March 2008 and pled guilty in March 2009 to Count 1 of the Indictment for possession with intent to distribute over five grams of cocaine base and Count 3 of the Indictment for possession of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking crime.

During the course of the Lake Charles Police Department conducting surveillance in the 800 block of 16th Street in Lake Charles, Louisiana, due to numerous complaints of drug activity occurring at 715 16th Street, the officers stopped a vehicle that was leaving the address for a traffic violation. During this stop, the police officers learned that the identity and sole occupant of the vehicle was MELVIN BOUTTE, who was also a target of the narcotics investigation. The officers elected to call out a K-9 unit to the scene when BOUTTE refused to sign a consent form to search the vehicle. The K-9 alerted to the presence of narcotics, and upon search of the vehicle, a “cookie” of crack cocaine (6.25 grams) and a .22 magnum pistol was found.

A search of other vehicles located at BOUTTE’s residence was performed, and a .380 caliber pistol was recovered. BOUTTE admitted ownership of the firearm.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission are only used as guidelines by the judge in determining the appropriate sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by U. S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Lake Charles Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney J. Collin Sims.

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