



U. S. Department of Justice

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PENSACOLA SEX OFFENDER SENTENCED TO ELEVEN YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ILLEGAL FIREARM CHARGES AND SUPERVISION VIOLATIONS

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA – James Leroy Smith Jr., 38, of Pensacola, Florida, was sentenced to 134 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of an unregistered short-barreled rifle, and multiple violations of his federal supervised release conditions. Smith was sentenced to 10 years in prison on the firearm charges, and he was sentenced to an additional 14 months for his supervision violations to run consecutively to his firearm case. The sentence was announced by Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

“Senseless violence by armed felons endangers the public and results in serious consequences,” stated U.S. Attorney Coody. “Our partners at the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office are to be commended for their swift actions in apprehending this violent felon. Due to their efforts our community is safer, and this repeat offender is exactly where he belongs – back behind bars.”

Court records indicate Smith was arrested by Escambia County Sheriff’s Office deputies on April 24, 2021, after shooting a black AR-style rifle loaded with rounds in a 100-round double-drum magazine at another car while driving through a Pensacola residential area. At the time, Smith was being supervised by the U.S. Probation Office following a prison sentence imposed for failure to register as a sex offender. In addition to that federal offense, he had nine other felony convictions, including a prior conviction for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and a conviction for sexual battery.

The sentence resulted from a joint investigation by the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alicia Forbes prosecuted this case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust

and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

As part of its PSN strategy, the United States Attorney's Office is encouraging everyone to lock their car doors, particularly at night. Burglaries from unlocked automobiles are a significant source of guns for criminals in the Northern District of Florida. Please do your part and protect yourself by locking your car doors.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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