



## U. S. Department of Justice

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United States Attorney  
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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL SENTENCED TO OVER 25 YEARS IN PRISON FOR FIREARM AND DRUG RELATED OFFENSES**

**GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA** – Lorenzo Joshua Johnson, Jr., 41, of Gainesville, Florida, was sentenced to 27.25 years in federal prison after he was convicted at trial of drug trafficking and possessing a firearm as a convicted felon on April 8, 2022. The sentence was announced by Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida.

“The collaborative efforts of our partners in the Gainesville Gun Violence Initiative continue to produce impactful results, and we will continue working tirelessly to make North Florida safer,” said U.S. Attorney Coody. “This sentence ensures that our community will be safer and sends a message that there are real and severe consequences for federal firearm offenses.”

Johnson will serve concurrent sentences of 5 years for the Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana and 27.25 years for the Possession of a Firearm by Convicted Felon charges. Johnson's prison sentence will be followed by 10 years of supervised release

“On behalf of the Gainesville Police Department, I want to express my appreciation to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the successful prosecution of this case,” said Chief Lonnie Scott, Gainesville Police Department. “The collaboration exhibited by the law enforcement agencies involved in this investigation is an exemplar of the power of teamwork. Thank you all for helping to keep our community safe.”

“We are more effective in our efforts to combat gun violence when we work together with our fellow law enforcement partners and will continue to make public safety a number one priority for our community,” said Alachua County Sheriff Clovis Watson, Jr.

On December 5, 2019, detectives with the Gainesville-Alachua County Drug Task Force conducted a surveillance operation in the Porter's neighborhood in Gainesville, Florida, after receiving citizen complaints about narcotics activity. These complaints included specific information about Johnson being one of the primary drug dealers in the neighborhood. During the surveillance operation that day, detectives observed Johnson engaging in hand-to-hand transactions and collecting cash from other street-level dealers. They also observed Johnson to

be wearing a distinctive backpack and driving a white Chevrolet Impala. Towards the end of the surveillance operation, detectives called in marked patrol units to detain several suspects who had been observed engaging in suspected drug transactions, to include Johnson. A search of Johnson's person revealed over \$600 cash and the key to the white Chevrolet Impala he had been seen driving. Johnson was arrested that day for driving on a suspended driver's license, he bonded out of jail while the investigation into the Impala was still ongoing.

A certified narcotics detection K-9 conducted an open-air sniff of the Impala, which was parked nearby, and positively alerted to the odor of narcotics. The Impala was towed and later searched pursuant to a search warrant. During the search, detectives located the backpack Johnson had been wearing and discovered it to contain a loaded Bersa 9 millimeter pistol with cocaine residue on the slide, two bags containing about one ounce of marijuana, a small baggie containing crack cocaine, a baggie containing over ten grams of tablets (later determined to contain a mixture of methamphetamine and Eutylone), two smart phones, empty baggies, digital scales, and personal documents belonging to Johnson. One latent fingerprint recovered from one of the digital scales was identified to Johnson. Detectives confirmed that Johnson is a multi-time convicted felon. An arrest warrant was obtained for state charges relating to the drugs and firearm recovered from the Impala, and it remained outstanding until Johnson was arrested on November 10, 2020. At that point, the case was brought to the attention of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms adopted the case for federal prosecution and conducted additional investigation, to include execution of a federal search warrant for Johnson's DNA, which was compared to DNA recovered from the Bersa firearm by an analyst at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. A mixed DNA profile recovered from the firearm was determined to include Johnson as a possible contributor. Johnson had multiple prior felony convictions, including Possession of Cocaine with Intent to Sell, Sale of Cocaine, Possession of Cocaine x2, Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer x2, Resisting an Officer with Violence x2, Child Abuse, Burglary Structure, Felony Criminal Mischief, and Felony Driving on Suspended License. Johnson had served two state prison sentences, including seven years in prison from 2010 to 2017. Johnson was determined to qualify as an Armed Career Criminal, which provided for an enhanced sentence, including a fifteen-year minimum mandatory term of imprisonment.

This sentencing resulted from the collaborative work of the Gainesville Police Department, Alachua County Sheriff's Office, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Chris Elsey.

The Gainesville GVI was established in April 2019, by the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida in an effort to stem the escalating gun violence in Gainesville and the surrounding area. As GVI partners, the State Attorney's Office for the Eight Judicial Circuit, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Gainesville Police Department, the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, the Alachua Police Department, the University of Florida Police Department, and the Florida Department of Corrections share this commitment to protecting public safety.

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