



## U. S. Department of Justice

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United States Attorney  
Northern District of Florida*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON FOR FIREARM POSSESSION**

**GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA** – Kenneth Michael Burton, 48, of Alachua, Florida, was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison after pleading guilty on August 17, 2021, to possessing a firearm as a convicted felon. Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney, for the Northern District of Florida announced the sentence.

“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.”

On the night of July 10, 2020, Burton confronted his ex-girlfriend in the parking lot of Bahama Breeze in Gainesville, Florida in violation of a permanent domestic violence injunction. After Burton initiated a verbal confrontation with the ex-girlfriend and her male friend, Burton struck the male in his face, leaving a deep laceration to his chin. Burton then unlawfully entered the ex-girlfriend's vehicle and retrieved a pistol she had purchased to protect herself from Burton. Once the ex-girlfriend saw that Burton had armed himself with her firearm, she quickly jumped into her vehicle and fled the area. As she was driving away, she observed Burton chasing after her vehicle with the gun still in his possession, she then heard a gunshot go off. As she was fleeing the area, she and other witnesses called 911 to report the incident. Gainesville Police Department (GPD) officers responded and quickly began tracking a blood trail from the Bahama Breeze parking lot towards a retention pond nearby. Ultimately, a GPD officer located the stolen firearm in the rocks along the edge of the retention pond. GPD officers were eventually able to speak with Burton on the phone and convince him to surrender. When officers made contact with Burton, they observed that he had suffered a gunshot wound to his leg. While receiving treatment at the hospital, Burton admitted to a detective that he retrieved the firearm from his ex-girlfriend's car and claimed that he accidentally shot himself in the leg as he was running away from the scene. Burton was arrested on numerous state charges stemming from this incident.

“The Gainesville Police Department is extremely satisfied with the outcome of this case as it demonstrates a commitment to both our victims of domestic violence as well as our firm conviction to combating armed suspect violence in every available venue. This incident could have very easily escalated into a domestic-related homicide investigation had it not been for the quick retreat of the intended victims. The cooperation of all the agencies involved in the Gun Violence Initiative has once again culminated in a violent felon being delivered an impressive sentence commensurate with the history and proclivities, he demonstrated that summer day.”

After Burton’s arrest, his case was adopted for federal prosecution by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) as part of the Gainesville Gun Violence Initiative (GVI). 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 Eighth 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.

“This sentence highlights how strong partnerships with our local law enforcement, help us to pursue, and bring to justice felons in possession of firearms, in our continued efforts to protect the public,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge, Craig W. Saier.

Burton had multiple prior felony convictions, including six-armed robberies, and attempted armed robbery convictions from South Carolina, and Florida convictions for felony battery – repeat offender (x2) and battery on a law enforcement officer. Burton 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 and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Chris Elsey.

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](https://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/USAOs/northern-district-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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