



# Department of Justice

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## **WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS MAN SENTENCED TO THREE LIFE SENTENCES FOR DRUG AND FIREARMS OFFENSES**

DALLAS - U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper announced that Wichita Falls, Texas, resident Maurice Johnson, Jr., a/k/a "Crackcorn," was sentenced today before the Honorable Jerry Buchmeyer, United States Senior District Judge to three life sentences and three sentences of 360 months imprisonment. After a three-day jury trial in December 2006, Johnson, 38, was convicted on all six counts in a federal indictment charging him with various drug and firearms offenses. Roper stated, "This stiff sentence continues the successful Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative between the U.S. Attorney's Office, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the North Texas Regional Drug Enforcement Task Force, the Wichita Falls Police Department, the Wichita Falls Sheriff's Office and the Wichita County District Attorney's Office."

In 2005, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and the Wichita Falls Police Department launched an investigation into cocaine base, or "crack" cocaine, trafficking in Wichita Falls, Texas. That investigation targeted large-scale street dealers, many of whom were known to carry or possess firearms while plying their illicit trade. Maurice Johnson, Jr., a violent recidivist known on the streets as "Crackcorn," was one of the armed crack dealers targeted in this investigation. Johnson had prior felony convictions for murder and drug distribution.

In January 2006, and again in February 2006, Johnson sold crack cocaine to a police informant. In March 2006, the police executed a state search warrant at Johnson's residence. In the trunk of his car, they found a loaded Taurus 9 millimeter gun and ammunition. They also seized drug distribution paraphernalia, such as baggies and drug scales, and more ammunition inside his house. Johnson had \$3,382 in cash proceeds from street-level drug sales on his person when he was arrested. He was subsequently released on bond on state charges.

While on release in May 2006, the police arrested Johnson on a federal firearm charge outside his residence in Wichita Falls. The police saw Johnson standing next to an opened barbecue grill that contained crack cocaine packaged for sale. The police searched his residence again, and found more crack, two sets of drugs scales, \$2,860 in cash, and two firearms, one of which was a Colt 9 millimeter pistol discovered under his mattress. Johnson told the police that he regularly acquired crack cocaine to sell from a named source of supply and that in the past year he had acquired 2-4 ounces of the drug from this source on 10 separate occasions,

indicating that he had obtained and sold 20-40 ounces of crack cocaine in the past year. He also admitted that he possessed the 9 millimeter pistol found under his mattress and claimed that he obtained it “on the streets.” Johnson was then re-indicted by a federal grand jury for additional drug and firearm offenses.

ATF Resident Agent in Charge Carl Walker stated, “This sentencing and entire investigation is evidence of our commitment to combat violent crime and gangs in our community. This effort will certainly continue with all of our law enforcement partners.”

U.S. Attorney Roper praised the investigative work of ATF and the Wichita Falls, Texas, Police Department. This case was presented for federal prosecution under the Project Safe Neighborhood initiative, a federal program designed to quickly and aggressively prosecute and punish firearm-related offenses. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gary Tromblay.

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