



# Department of Justice

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Western District of Kentucky

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**OWENSBORO MAN SENTENCED TO 5 YEARS AND 3 MONTHS FOR POSSESSION  
OF CRACK COCAINE WITH THE INTENT TO DISTRIBUTE AND POSSESSION OF  
A FIREARM BY A CONVICTED FELON**

LOUISVILLE, KY - Vermicki San Juan Watts, age 32, of Owensboro, Kentucky, in Daviess County, was sentenced to 5 years and 3 months imprisonment in United States District Court, Owensboro, Kentucky, for possession of crack cocaine with the intent to distribute and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, David L. Huber, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky, and Paul Vido, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Louisville Field Division, jointly announced today. Joseph H. McKinley, Jr., Judge, United States District Court, also sentenced Watts to 3 years supervised release following incarceration. There is no parole in the federal judicial system. Watts had previously pled guilty to possession of crack cocaine with the intent to distribute and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

U.S. Attorney Huber praised the excellent police work of the Owensboro Police Department, stating “local and federal cooperation helped remove a drug dealer from the streets for over five years.”

Watts admitted that on October 24, 2006, he possessed, at his home, 108 milligrams of

crack cocaine that he intended to sell, a digital scale and materials used to package crack cocaine for distribution. He also had a .45 caliber, semi-automatic, Taurus model PT-145 pistol with ammunition, after having previously been convicted of a Class D felony, trafficking in marijuana, in a 2002 case out of Vanderburgh County, Indiana, Case #92D02-0201-FD-59. This conviction prohibited his possession of any firearm. The case was initiated by the Owensboro Police Department with an execution of a state search warrant on Watts' residence.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ann Claire Phillips. The Bowling Green Field Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) conducted the investigation in partnership with the Owensboro Police Department, as part of ATF's mandated mission to reduce violent crime and other threats to public safety.

This is a **Project Backfire** prosecution. **Project Backfire** is a partnership of state and federal law enforcement which targets violent offenders for prosecution to the fullest extent of state and federal law.

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