



## U.S. Department of Justice

*Charles R. Gross  
United States Attorney  
Western District of Michigan*

---

5<sup>th</sup> Floor, The Law Building  
330 Ionia Avenue, NW  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

*Mailing Address:  
United States Attorney's Office  
Post Office Box 208  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501-0208*

*Telephone (616) 456-2404  
Facsimile (616) 456-2408*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2007**  
**[WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/MIW](http://WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/MIW)**

**CONTACT: NILS KESSLER**  
**ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY**  
**PHONE: (616) 456-2404**

### **KALAMAZOO CRACK DEALER SENTENCED TO LIFE**

**GRAND RAPIDS, Michigan** – Karl Alan White, Jr., 28, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, was sentenced by Chief U.S. District Judge Robert Holmes Bell to spend the rest of his natural life in prison for crack cocaine and firearms charges, U.S. Attorney Charles R. Gross announced today. There is no parole in the federal system.

After a four-day jury trial that concluded on July 20, 2007, White was convicted of seven separate drug and gun charges, including conspiracy to distribute crack and powder cocaine, possessing and discharging firearms during drug trafficking crimes, and being a felon in possession of firearms.

White was the leader of the "First Family," an informal gang of armed cocaine traffickers who supplied the Kalamazoo area with cocaine from at least 2003 until his arrest in early 2007. After investigating the case for over a year, DEA and the Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team set up a sting operation to capture White. White negotiated with a confidential informant and an undercover Kalamazoo detective to purchase two kilograms of cocaine for \$38,000. On January 22, 2007, White sent a college student to pick up the package, who was arrested after accepting

delivery. White's negotiations with the undercover team and his conversation with the courier were recorded and played for the jury, and the courier testified against White at trial.

Several other incidents dating back to 2003 were also presented to the jury. On November 21, 2003, White and co-conspirator Shaquann Branson were stopped by Kalamazoo Public Safety Officers in one of White's Cadillac Escalades. White was found in possession of crack cocaine and a loaded .40 caliber semiautomatic pistol.

On December 28, 2004, Kalamazoo Public Safety officers observed White engaging in what appeared to be a hand-to-hand drug transaction at a Kalamazoo gas station. Police stopped White and girlfriend Sharmeka Williams after a brief pursuit. In a duffel bag in the back seat, they found 87 grams of crack cocaine in a "fix-a-flat" can with a false bottom. White had over \$8,000 cash in his pocket, which he claimed he had earned by "rapping". Witnesses at trial (including White's own) testified that White had never performed or recorded as a "rap" artist, but merely hung around a local studio from time to time.

On January 1, 2006, several bystanders were shot during a melee outside the Days Inn in Kalamazoo. Officers responding to the incident observed White and other First Family members leaving the scene in another of White's Escalades. Police tracked White to the apartment of an ex-girlfriend, where he was arrested for violation of a Personal Protection Order. Police found a loaded, 9 mm semiautomatic pistol in the dresser drawer of a toddler's room.

Testimony showed that White showed up at the apartment after the shooting covered in blood, and left the gun in the drawer. Testimony also showed that White had repeatedly beaten his former girlfriend, ran her off the road, kidnaped her child, and doused her apartment in gasoline to intimidate her into recanting her testimony. The former girlfriend testified that White

and his former attorney coerced her into taking a polygraph examination to see if she had talked to police, and instructed her to lie to a federal grand jury. Another witness testified that White offered him money and explosives to blow up the ex-girlfriend's car. The car was in fact set on fire by a person or persons as yet not identified.

Several mid-level cocaine distributors testified at trial that White was their supplier. These witnesses established that White dealt at least 300 kilograms of cocaine during the course of the conspiracy, at an average price of \$20,000 per kilogram. They further established that White had purchased luxury automobiles and jewelry with the proceeds, and spent up to \$3,500 per night at nightclubs. The United States seized two Cadillac Escalades (one with six television sets), a Chrysler 300C, and two modified older Cadillacs in connection with this case.

After his conviction, White sent letters from jail threatening government witnesses. His attempts to obstruct justice and suborn perjury were duly noted by the Court, and contributed to his sentence.

U.S. Attorney Gross commended the work of the Kalamazoo Valley Enforcement Team, the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) for their work on this case. Mr. Gross noted that "protecting our communities from gun violence and the scourge of crack cocaine is of paramount importance to the U.S. Attorney's Office. As a result of the hard work of these dedicated law enforcement officers, Mr. White's reign of crime has ended for good."

This case was prosecuted on behalf of the United States of America by Assistant United States Attorneys Nils Kessler and Matthew Borgula.

##END##