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**GRAND RAPIDS CRACK DEALER GETS 24 YEARS IN PRISON**

**Grand Rapids, Mich.** – Rodney Theodore Tillman, 35, of Grand Rapids, has been sentenced to 24 years in prison for possessing cocaine base (‘crack’) with the intent to distribute, possessing an illegal firearm, and possessing a firearm in relation to a drug trafficking crime, U.S. Attorney Charles R. Gross announced today. Tillman pleaded guilty to the charges on December 3, 2007.

On May 8, 2007, the Grand Rapids Police Department responded to a tip that Tillman was selling crack at a bar in the city. When confronted by police, Tillman reached towards his waistband, where police later found a loaded .44 magnum revolver. They also found 31 grams of crack cocaine and a quantity of cash in his pockets. Tillman has two prior felony drug trafficking convictions. In addition to 24 years in prison, Tillman will serve 8 years of supervision following his release. Tillman was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Paul L. Maloney.

The case against Tillman was investigated by the Grand Rapids Police Department and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It was prosecuted as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a federal-state-local law enforcement partnership focused on reducing gun-related violent crime in West Michigan. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nils R. Kessler.

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