



PRESS RELEASE

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May 20, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEFENDANT FOUND GUILTY OF ATTEMPTING TO STEAL FIVE KILOGRAMS OF
COCAINE FROM AN UNDERCOVER LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Nashville, TN - May 20, 2005- Jim Vines, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee, announced that Travon Gardner of Nashville, Tennessee, was convicted yesterday after a two-day jury trial which included evidence about Gardner's participation in a drug conspiracy to obtain 5 kilograms of cocaine from an undercover officer. The jury convicted Gardner of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and to distribute 5 kilograms or more of cocaine; aiding and abetting an attempt to possess with intent to distribute, or distribute, 5 kilograms or more of cocaine; aiding and abetting possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime; and aiding and abetting a felon in possession of a firearm.

The trial took place before United States District Judge Todd J. Campbell. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for August 12, 2005.

Officers with the 15th Judicial Drug Task Force set up a controlled delivery of 5 kilograms of cocaine to Lorenzo McMillion. On July 15, 2005, undercover officers with the 15th Judicial Task Force met with McMillion in a restaurant parking lot in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. Later on the same day, McMillion met with a confidential informant in a parking lot in Lebanon, Tennessee. McMillion, Travon Gardner and Charles Hassell were in a car driven by McMillion during this meeting. The confidential informant was shown a bag that appeared to contain \$90,000 in cash. The confidential informant told McMillion, Gardner and Hassell to follow him to a motel further down Interstate 40.

McMillion, Gardner and Hassell followed the confidential informant to a motel in Gordonsville, Tennessee, where McMillion met with undercover officers in a motel room. Once McMillion entered the motel room, he was arrested. Officers from the 15th Judicial Drug Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), 18th Judicial Drug Task Force, 20th Judicial Drug Task Force, and the Tennessee Highway Patrol assisted in the surveillance conducted on July 15, 2005, and ultimately the arrest of McMillion, Gardner and Hassell on that same date. When officers moved in to arrest Charles Hassell and Travon Gardner, Hassell was seated in the front passenger seat, and Travon Gardner was seated in the rear seat on the passenger side of the car. Officers located a loaded Interdynamic 9-mm pistol within easy reach of Hassell and a loaded Fabrique 9-mm pistol within easy reach of Gardner. In the floorboard in front of the drivers seat officers found a shrink-wrapped plastic bag containing what appeared to be 9 rolls of cash. Each roll contained a \$100 bill wrapped around cut up pieces of magazine. Written on the plastic bag was "90K." Officers also located a roll of duct tape and a pair of gloves in Gardner's pocket. McMillion, Gardner and Hassell intended to steal the cocaine from the undercover officers.

The case was investigated by the 15th Judicial Drug Task Force; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the 18th Judicial Drug Task Force; the 20th Judicial Drug Task Force; and the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

Assistant United States Attorneys Harold B. McDonough and Chasity F. Goodner for the Middle District of Tennessee prosecuted the case for the United States.

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