



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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ORLANDO MAN SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 20 YEARS IN "PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS " CASE

ORLANDO - United States District Court Judge Gregory A. Presnell today sentenced WALTER LEE ARGRO, JR., 44, of Orlando, to a term of imprisonment of 20 years, 8 months on federal drug and firearms charges. Argro previously had entered a guilty plea to the three-count indictment charging him with possession of cocaine base with the intent to distribute (Count One); possession of marijuana with the intent to distribute (Count Two); and possession of a firearm during and in relation to a drug trafficking offense (Count Three) on January 9, 2003. In addition to his 20 year, 8 month prison term, Argro will be required to serve 5 years on supervised release, perform 150 hours of community service, and pay a \$100 special assessment as a part of his sentence.

According to the facts established at the plea hearing, the Altamonte Springs Police Department stopped Argro's automobile on April 29, 2002, because of illegal window tinting. When a Casselberry Police Department K-9 subsequently alerted on the vehicle, Argro ran from the officers. He was apprehended a short distance away when his clothing

became entangled on a fence. A search of both Argro and his vehicle revealed 22.3 grams of crack cocaine, 215.9 grams of marihuana, and a .38 special revolver. As a previously convicted felon, Argro was prohibited from possessing a firearm under federal law.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Casselberry Police Department, and the Altamonte Springs Police Department. It is another case prosecuted as a part of the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF). United States Attorney Paul Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials and calling our effort "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!" The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr. and Special Assistant United States Attorney Thomas Briggmann.

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