



NEWS RELEASE

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE
FIVE FELONS SENTENCED;
TWO BROTHERS RECEIVE LONGEST SENTENCES
OF ANY CEASEFIRE CASE

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that five defendants were sentenced in federal court today for being felons in possession of a firearm, in four separate and unrelated cases. Two of those defendants, Graves added, received the longest sentences ever ordered in a case under Project Ceasefire, the district's continuing anti-crime initiative.

“Project Ceasefire is designed to keep guns out of the hands of felons, and to keep felons who insist on carrying guns behind bars – where they can't be a threat to the community,” Graves said. “Today's sentencing should send a loud message to any other felon to think twice before picking up a gun or committing another crime.”

* **Michael Jackson**, 43, address unknown, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple this morning to 27 years and three months in federal prison without parole.

* **Fabian Jackson**, 35, address unknown, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple this morning to 24 years and seven months in federal prison without parole.

According to Graves, those mark the longest sentences to date in any Project Ceasefire case. “Their past criminal behavior, and the fact that these defendants stole the gun during the commission of a violent crime, were all factors leading to a lengthy imprisonment,” Graves said. “These brothers will be behind bars for nearly the rest of their productive lives, and our community will be that much safer as a result. This is a striking example of the need to aggressively prosecute those who violate federal firearms law.”

On Aug. 28, 2002, a federal jury convicted both co-defendants – who are brothers – for being in possession of a Winchester 30-06 caliber rifle, despite previous criminal felony convictions, and each having been convicted of three violent felonies. The brothers were apprehended with the rifle, which they stole during a burglary together, after a high-speed chase that exceeded 100 m.p.h. as they fled from the scene of the burglary.

Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Michael Jackson** has seven previous criminal felony convictions for burglary (five separate convictions), stealing and auto theft. **Fabian Jackson** has seven previous felony convictions for burglary (two counts), stealing (three counts in two separate convictions) and auto theft (two separate convictions).

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce E. Clark. It was investigated by the Clinton County Sheriff's Department, the Clay County Sheriff's Department, the Kearney, Missouri Police Department, the Missouri Highway Patrol, the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

* **Sammie L. Cockshell**, 36, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to six years in federal prison without parole.

On Dec. 2, 2002, **Cockshell** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, he admitted to being in possession of a Colt .380 caliber semi-automatic pistol on July 18, 2002. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Cockshell** has three 1992 criminal felony convictions for sale of crack cocaine, possession of crack cocaine, and assault, all in Jackson County.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rudolph R. Rhodes, IV. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

* **Michael E. Conley**, 26, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Dean Whipple this afternoon to three years and one month in federal prison without parole.

On Feb. 12, 2002, **Conley** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of ammunition. By pleading guilty, he admitted to being in possession of six live rounds of .357 ammunition on Aug. 18, 2001. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Conley** has a 1997 criminal felony conviction for assault and a 1995 criminal felony conviction for assault.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David M. Ketchmark. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

* **Joseph E. Starr**, 21, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this morning to one year and 11 months in federal prison without parole.

On April 12, 2001, **Starr** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, he admitted to being in possession of a Smith & Wesson 9mm semi-automatic pistol on April 5, 2001. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Starr** has a 2000 criminal felony conviction for trafficking in Jackson County.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul S. Becker. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement that targets persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms for federal prosecution. Project Ceasefire has resulted in federal charges against 385 defendants, and convictions against 337 of those defendants, including 314 who pleaded guilty and 23 who were convicted at trial. A total of 288 of the 337 convicted defendants have been sentenced, and 49 currently await sentencing hearings.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow