



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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APRIL 17, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROJECT CEASEFIRE
THREE DEFENDANTS SENTENCED
FOR VIOLATING FEDERAL FIREARMS LAWS

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that three defendants were sentenced in federal court today in separate and unrelated cases for violating federal firearms laws. The cases mark additional progress under Project Ceasefire, the district's ongoing anti-crime initiative.

***Raymond L. Sirls**, 47, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced in federal court by U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to two years and six months in federal prison without parole.

On Jan. 10, 2003, **Sirls** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, **Sirls** admitted that he was in possession of a Ruger 9 mm pistol on Nov. 8, 2002. It is illegal, Graves explained, for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Sirls** has a 1990 criminal felony conviction for sale of a controlled substance.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David M. Ketchmark. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

***Stephen L. Smith**, 32, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced in federal court by U.S. District Chief Judge Dean Whipple this morning to two years and 10 months in federal prison without parole.

On Oct. 24, 2002, **Smith** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, **Smith** admitted that he was in possession of a Ruger .45 caliber handgun on July 28, 2003. It is illegal, Graves explained, for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Smith** has a 1994 criminal felony conviction for possession of an illegal shotgun.

This case was prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael J. Hunt. It was investigated by the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

***Roderick McKinney**, 27, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced in federal court by U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this morning to one year and nine months in federal prison without parole.

On Dec. 17, 2002, **McKinney** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, **McKinney** admitted that he was in possession of a Rossi .38 caliber five-shot revolver on Dec. 2, 2002. It is illegal, Graves explained, for a felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **McKinney** has a 1997 criminal felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance.

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

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms for federal prosecution. Project Ceasefire has resulted in federal charges against 420 defendants, and convictions against 347 of those defendants, including 324 who pleaded guilty and 23 who were convicted at trial. A total of 302 of the 347 convicted defendants have been sentenced, and 45 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