



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **JURY CONVICTS ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL FOR ILLEGALLY POSSESSING A FIREARM**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Greene County, Mo. man, was convicted by a federal jury today for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

**Jessie J. Sprouse**, 33, of Springfield, Mo., was found guilty today of being a felon in possession of a firearm on Aug. 29, 2002.

The three-day trial began on July 30, 2003. The jury began deliberations the afternoon of July 31, 2003, and returned its verdict this morning to U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr.

The jury found **Sprouse** guilty of being in possession of a Jennings 9 mm pistol on Aug. 29, 2002. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Sprouse** has four prior criminal felony convictions for stealing in 1991, possession of a controlled substance in 1993, felony stealing and first degree property damage in 1995, and unlawful use of a weapon in 1997.

**Sprouse** was originally indicted by a federal grand jury on Nov. 13, 2002. Because of his prior criminal felony convictions, **Sprouse** is considered an armed career criminal. Therefore, the government is seeking an enhanced sentence, Graves said.

As a result of the jury conviction, **Sprouse** may be subject to a sentence not less than 15 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine of up to \$250,000. His sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

The case was prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Daniel Patterson under

Project Safe Neighborhoods in cooperation with the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. It was investigated by the Springfield, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

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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](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow)