



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE
FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS FELON
FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARM

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Kansas City, Mo., man was convicted by a federal jury today for being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Eddie S. Bell, 47, of Kansas City, Mo., was found guilty by a federal trial jury of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Following the presentation of evidence in **Bell's** trial, Graves said, the jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City deliberated for approximately five hours before returning the guilty verdict to U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith, ending a trial that began on April 28, 2004.

The federal jury found **Bell** guilty of being a felon in possession of a Taurus 9 mm pistol on Sept. 27, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Bell** has several criminal felony convictions for stealing, receiving stolen property, burglary and possession of a controlled substance. The convictions date back as far as 1977 and the most recent occurred in 2003.

Law enforcement officers found **Bell** in possession of the firearm after responding to an overdose call in the 4400 block of 39th Street in Kansas City. Upon arrival at the scene, officers found **Bell** seated in the driver's seat of his vehicle, unresponsive to questions. Emergency personnel treated **Bell** for overdosing on heroin, which he had injected into his arm.

After attending to **Bell**, law enforcement officers discovered that he had been convicted of a felony. A subsequent search of his vehicle revealed that he was in possession of the semi-automatic pistol, Graves said.

Under federal statutes, **Bell** may be subject to a maximum sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine 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.

This case is being 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, Firearms and Explosives.

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 for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.

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