



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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Virginia Beach Man Convicted of Discharging Firearm During Drug Deal Gone bad

(Norfolk, VA) - Daniel Paul Sanderford, age 25, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, pled guilty yesterday in United States District Court in Norfolk to carrying, using, brandishing, and discharging a firearm during a drug trafficking crime and to possession of a firearm as a previously convicted felon. Sanderford faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years, and a maximum of life imprisonment, when he is sentenced on January 22, 2007. Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, and William J. Hoover, Special Agent-in-Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) announced the guilty plea.

Court documents state that as a result of an investigation into "straw" purchases of firearms in the Hampton Roads area, agents of the ATF determined that Sanderford was involved with Matthew Scott Collins, a drug dealer in Virginia Beach, and participated with Collins in a shootout at a Harris Teeter parking lot in Virginia Beach on February 20, 2005. Collins had set up a sale of fake cocaine to a customer with the intention of "ripping him off" and taking his money. Sanderford and Collins, who were both armed, and several associates, drove to the meeting place. During the transaction, the buyer realized the cocaine was fake and started arguing with Collins' delivery man. At that point Collins and Sanderford discharged their semiautomatic pistols. No one was hit and all escaped without being apprehended by the police.

Later, on May 17, 2005, Sanderford accompanied Collins to a house in the Hilltop Regency area of Virginia Beach. Collins shot into a dwelling where a person with whom Collins had a disagreement lived. In addition, Sanderford admitted he brought a number of stolen firearms down from Orange County, Virginia, to be traded to Collins for cocaine, and introduced to Collins persons from Orange County who bought cocaine from Collins.

The case was prosecuted under Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN)/EXILE, a federal program that uses a joint federal and state multi-agency approach to targeting armed criminals

for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. It is a nationwide effort by the U.S. Department of Justice aimed at reducing violent crimes. Most firearms cases involve or are related to drug trafficking. Since its inception in Hampton Roads in late 1997, Project PSN/EXILE has produced over 1163 convictions and removed over 1997 firearms from armed criminals.

The investigation was conducted by the ATF. Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe is prosecuting the case for the United States.

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