



# Department of Justice

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## ARMED DRUG DEALER SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

MADISON, WIS. - Scott C. Blader, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Verdell Thomas, 21, Madison, Wisconsin, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge James D. Peterson to six years in federal prison for possessing crack cocaine with intent to distribute, and for possessing a loaded firearm in furtherance of that offense. Thomas pleaded guilty to these charges on October 6, 2020.

A confidential informant working with the Dane County Narcotics Task Force (DCNTF) purchased small quantities of crack cocaine from Thomas on three occasions in 2020. Based on those controlled buys, DCNTF had probable cause to arrest Thomas. Thomas was arrested at a local gas station on May 7, 2020. He had 6.6 grams of crack cocaine, a scale, over \$4,000, and a loaded 9mm pistol, all in his pants pockets.

At the time of his arrest, Thomas was on probation for a December 17, 2019, felony conviction for possession with intent to deliver cocaine in Dane County. Thomas told law enforcement officers he was armed because "everyone is" and he had to protect his drugs. Judge Peterson ordered the six-year sentence to be served consecutively to an 18-month state revocation sentence Thomas is currently serving for the Dane County conviction.

Judge Peterson rejected Thomas' request for a sentence of five years and one day, because Thomas is a dangerous young man, with an extensive criminal history that includes acts of violence.

This case has been brought as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), the U.S. Justice Department's program to reduce violent crime. The PSN approach involves collaboration by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and communities to prevent and deter gun violence.

The charges against Thomas were the result of an investigation conducted by the Dane County Narcotics Task Force. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rita M. Rumbelow.

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