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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Iowa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Cedar Rapids Man to Spend More than Seven Years in Federal Prison for COVID-19 Fraud and Illegally Possessing a Gun

A man who received COVID-19 relief funds that he was not entitled to and unlawfully possessed firearms was sentenced November 29, 2021, to more than seven years in federal prison.

Dannish Dontreal Robertson, age 22, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, received the prison term after a May 21, 2021 guilty plea to one count of wire fraud and one count of possession of a firearm by an unlawful user of a controlled substance.

Information from a plea agreement and sentencing showed that, in June 2020, fraudulent applications in Robertson's name were submitted for loans intended to aid small businesses struggling with the economic effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Robertson received more than \$30,000 in loan funds because of the false applications. Robertson then sent some of the money to other participants in the scheme and spent some of it himself at high-end retailers.

Robertson is a convicted felon and an unlawful drug user. He admitted to unlawfully possessing five firearms between 2018 and 2020. This included possessing a firearm during an incident on July 28, 2018, in which Robertson ran from a Cedar Rapids police officer while clutching a gun in his waistband. Robertson discarded the gun behind a house. The loaded gun was not found until August 11, 2018, when a resident found it and reported it to the police.

Robertson was sentenced in Cedar Rapids by United States District Court Judge C.J. Williams. Robertson was sentenced to 87 months' imprisonment. He was ordered to make \$20,607 in restitution to a Small Business Administration lending institution and \$10,000 to the Small Business Administration. He must also serve a five-year term of supervised release after the prison term. There is no parole in the federal system.

This prosecution is an example of the Department of Justice's strong commitment to combating fraud and criminal activity related to COVID-19. Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

This case was also brought as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). PSN is the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. PSN is an evidence-based program proven to be effective at reducing violent crime. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders work together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

Robertson is being held in the United States Marshal's custody until he can be transported to a federal prison.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Kyndra Lundquist and investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Small Business Administration - Office of Inspector General, as well as the Cedar Rapids Safe Streets Task Force. The task force is composed of representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Cedar Rapids Police Department.

Court file information at <https://ecf.iand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

The case file numbers are 21-CR-008, 21-CR-009.

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Topic(s):

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Project Safe Neighborhoods

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Component(s):

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