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**ROCKFORD "ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL" SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS WITHOUT PAROLE FOR ILLEGALLY POSSESSING/SELLING FIREARMS**

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; LARRY FORD, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives (ATF); RICHARD MEYERS, Winnebago County Sheriff; and STEVEN PUGH, Rockford Police Chief, today made the following announcement:

United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard today sentenced LONNIE E. HAVENS, 45 (DOB: 6/11/57), formerly of 2336 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Rockford, to 15 years in prison without parole for being a felon illegally possessing and selling firearms. Havens, with four prior burglary convictions, was sentenced as an "armed career criminal" under a federal firearm law mandating non-paroleable prison sentences of 15 years or more for felons with extensive records of prior convictions who illegally possesses or sells guns.

At the time of his guilty plea on December 23, 2002, Lonnie Havens admitted that on November 27, 2001, he and his son, Justin Havens, illegally possessed and sold a .12 gauge shotgun to a witness who was cooperating with law enforcement officers. Lonnie Havens also admitted at the time of his guilty plea that on December 5, 2001, he and Justin illegally possessed and sold a .22 caliber rifle to the cooperating witness. Both illegal gun sales took place at Lonnie and Justin Havens' residence at 2336 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street which, as noted by a prosecutor at sentencing, was in close proximity to what the *Rockford Register Star* recently described as Rockford's "bloody L."

Justin G. Havens, 20 (DOB: 12/23/82), formerly of 2336 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Rockford, himself a convicted felon, was sentenced on January 10, 2003, to 78 months in prison without eligibility for parole for his participation in these gun sales and his sale of cocaine on December 3, 2001.

Both Lonnie and Justin Havens were prosecuted under tough federal firearms laws as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an intensive, cooperative effort between local, state, and federal law enforcement to attack gun crimes. The cornerstone of the program is that every felon with a gun will be reviewed for possible federal prosecution in order to target the harshest penalties for the worst offenders. Additional information about Project Safe Neighborhoods may be found at [www.psn.gov](http://www.psn.gov).

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives and the Rockford-Winnebago County Metro Narcotics Unit. It was prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorneys Daniel L. Olson and Monica V. Mallory and Assistant United States Attorney-in-Charge Keith C. Syfert.

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