



Escambia County Sheriff's Office
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U.S. Department of Justice
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PRIOR FEDERAL FELON CONVICTED
ON ARMED ROBBERY CHARGES OF PUBLIX SUPERMARKET

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA – Nathaniel O. Cox, 30, was found guilty by a federal jury on Thursday of Hobbs Act robbery and brandishing a Kel-Tec SUB-2000 assault rifle during the commission of a crime of violence, announced Acting United States Attorney Jason R. Coody. Cox was previously convicted of a similar crime in the Middle District of Georgia in 2015; for which he was sentenced to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, having been released in May 2020.

Trial evidence revealed that on the evening of October 22, 2020, Cox entered the Publix supermarket located at 5998 Mobile Highway in Pensacola, Florida, where he confronted a store manager and another employee, warning that he was armed and there to rob the store. Cox then instructed them to take him to the money room. Once inside, Cox brandished his semi-automatic rifle and instructed the two employees, along with a third employee who was inside the room, to gather the money and place it in his backpack. The employees were then ordered to lay on top of each other and to count out loud or they would be shot. Cox then fled the supermarket with the stolen United States currency. The Escambia County Sheriff's Office was the first to respond to and investigate the crime scene. Working in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, law enforcement officers were able to locate Cox at the international airport in Jacksonville, Florida, after he fled Pensacola, where he was taken into custody without incident. Law enforcement also recovered the assault rifle used to commit the robbery.

“The investigation and prosecution of violence crime – in this case by an armed repeat offender – is central to our mission to protect the public,” stated Acting U.S. Attorney Coody. “As a result of the collaboration and outstanding investigative work of our law enforcement partners at the Escambia County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, this violent, armed robber has been adjudicated guilty and will be sentenced for his criminal conduct.”

“A priority for ATF is reducing violent crime and protecting the public. Through collaborative efforts with our local law enforcement partner's, we were able to capture this dangerous felon and prevent him from any further threats to our communities. This prosecution demonstrates that working jointly with our local partners makes the communities safer,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Craig W. Saier.

“We are pleased that our working relationship with our federal partners led to the arrest and conviction of Mr. Cox. This is another example of local law enforcement and federal agencies coming together to serve and protect our community,” said Escambia County Chief Deputy Tommi Lyter

This conviction was the result of a joint investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and the Escambia County Sheriff’s Office. Assistant United States Attorneys David L. Goldberg and Jennifer H. Callahan prosecuted the case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), 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 works 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.

As part of its PSN strategy, the United States Attorney’s Office is encouraging everyone to lock their car doors, particularly at night. Burglaries from unlocked automobiles are a significant source of guns for criminals in the Northern District of Florida. Please do your part and protect yourself by locking your car doors.

Cox’s sentencing hearing is scheduled for December 21, 2021, at 10:00 am at the United States Courthouse in Pensacola before the Honorable United States District Judge M. Casey Rodgers. Due to a prior federal violent crime conviction, Cox faces a mandatory minimum 25 years’ imprisonment on the charges.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation’s principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access available public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](https://www.uscourts.gov/uscourts/ndfl) website. For more information about the United States Attorney’s Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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