

# U.S. Dept. of Justice: Illinois man sentenced to 8 1/2 years for robbery of retail store in Lake Delton

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MADISON, WIS. – Timothy M. O’Shea, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Cortez Thurmond, 29, Gurnee, Illinois, was sentenced today by Chief U.S. District Judge James D. Peterson to 8 ½ years in federal prison for robbery of a retail store in Lake Delton, Wisconsin. Thurmond pleaded guilty to this charge on October 20, 2021.

On July 28, 2020, Thurmond and his co-defendant Deon Brown robbed the Alpha Red Studio in Lake Delton. A few minutes later, and less than a mile away, Thurmond and Brown robbed Gifts of the World retail store. Video surveillance from Gifts of the World showed Thurmond and Brown taking money from the store and customers. During the robbery, Brown carried a firearm with an extended magazine and struck a customer in the back of the head with it.

At the time of the robberies, Thurmond was on active state supervision in Illinois for a felony burglary conviction. At the sentencing hearing, Judge Peterson noted that Thurmond had an extensive criminal history including prior convictions for home invasion and burglary. Judge Peterson also noted that he had a duty to protect the public from Thurmond’s “really dangerous offenses.”

Brown pleaded guilty on January 26, 2022 to robbing Gifts of the World with Thurmond. Brown will be sentenced by Judge Peterson on April 20, 2022.

Thurmond and Brown also face federal charges in the Eastern District of Wisconsin, where a grand jury returned an indictment charging Thurmond and Brown with conspiring to rob various commercial establishments in Racine and Kenosha. This

indictment was returned by the grand jury on January 11, 2022. With regard to these charges, you are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

The charges against Thurmond and Brown were a result of an investigation conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Lake Delton Police Department, and the Racine Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Wegner handled the prosecution.