

Convicted Felon Sentenced to 71 Months' Imprisonment for Illegal Possession of Firearm

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS – A man from St. Clair County will spend nearly six years in prison for illegally possessing a firearm. Nicholas A. Briddell, 33, of Belleville, was sentenced on Tuesday to 71 months in federal prison for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm.

According to court documents, on March 6, 2021, officers with the East St. Louis Police Department witnessed Briddell lean out of the passenger window of a vehicle stopped at an intersection near the Visions Night Club in East St. Louis. Briddell was holding a bottle of alcohol in one hand and a handgun in the other. Briddell then proceeded to point the firearm at patrons walking towards the door of the nightclub.

ESPLD officers stopped the vehicle, arrested Briddell and found the firearm under the seat where Briddell had been sitting. The gun was loaded with a round in the chamber. At the time of his arrest, Briddell was a multiple-convicted felon, with prior convictions for armed robbery and possession with intent to distribute cocaine.

Federal law prohibits convicted felons from possessing firearms or firearm ammunition. A federal grand jury in East St. Louis indicted Briddell in October 2021, and he pled guilty in September 2022.

“Pointing a loaded handgun at unsuspecting patrons is a bad, reckless decision, and the defendant will have time to think about his actions in federal prison,” said U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. “It cannot be understated: we’re fortunate to have local, state and federal law enforcement partners promoting public safety in East St. Louis.”

As part of his sentence, Briddell will serve a two-year term of supervised release following his release from federal prison.

The investigation was conducted by the ESLPD and the Public Safety Enforcement Group of the Illinois State Police. Further assistance in the investigation was provided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ali Burns and David Dean prosecuted the case.