

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA  
CEDAR RAPIDS DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

RONALD DONELSON,

Defendant.

No. CR 05-0020-LRR

**FINAL JURY INSTRUCTIONS**

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury:

The instructions I gave you at the beginning of the trial and during the trial remain in effect. I will now give you some additional instructions.

You must, of course, continue to follow the instructions I gave you earlier, as well as those I give you now. You must not single out some instructions and ignore others, because all are important. This is true even though some of those I gave you at the beginning of and during trial are not repeated here.

The instructions I am about to give you now are in writing and will be available to you in the jury room. I emphasize, however, that this does not mean they are more important than my earlier instructions. Again, all instructions, whenever given and whether in writing or not, must be followed.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

In considering these instructions, attach no importance or significance whatsoever to the order in which they are given.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

Neither in these instructions nor in any ruling, action, or remark that I have made during this trial have I intended to give any opinion or suggestion as to what the facts are or what your verdict should be.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

It is your duty to find from the evidence what the facts are. You will then apply the law, as I give it to you, to those facts. You must follow my instructions on the law, even if you thought the law was different or should be different.

Do not allow sympathy or prejudice to influence you. The law demands of you a just verdict, unaffected by anything except the evidence, your common sense, and the law as I give it to you.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

I have mentioned the word “evidence.” The “evidence” in this case consists of the following: the testimony of the witnesses; the documents and other things received as exhibits; and stipulations, that is, agreements between the parties that certain facts are as they have stated.

You may use reason and common sense to draw deductions or conclusions from facts which have been established by the evidence in the case.

Certain things are not evidence. I shall list those things again for you now:

1. Statements, arguments, questions, and comments by the lawyers are not evidence.

2. Objections are not evidence. The parties have a right to object when they believe something is improper. You should not be influenced by the objection. If I sustained an objection to a question, you must ignore the question and must not try to guess what the answer might have been.

3. Testimony that I struck from the record, or told you to disregard, is not evidence and must not be considered.

4. Anything you saw or heard about this case outside the courtroom is not evidence.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

There are two types of evidence from which a jury may properly find the truth as to the facts of a case: direct evidence and circumstantial evidence. Direct evidence is the evidence of the witness to a fact or facts of which they have knowledge by means of their senses. The other is circumstantial evidence—the proof of a chain of circumstances pointing to the existence or nonexistence of certain facts. The law makes no distinction between direct and circumstantial evidence. You should give all evidence the weight and value you believe it is entitled to receive.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

The jurors are the sole judges of the weight and credibility of the testimony and the value to be given to each witness who has testified in this case. In deciding what the facts are, you may have to decide what testimony you believe and what testimony you do not believe. You may believe all of what a witness said, or only part of it, or none of it.

In deciding what testimony to believe, consider the witness's intelligence, the opportunity the witness had to have seen or heard the things testified about, the witness's memory, any motives that witness may have for testifying a certain way, the manner of the witness while testifying, whether that witness said something different at an earlier time, the general reasonableness of the testimony, and the extent to which the testimony is consistent with any evidence that you believe.

In deciding whether or not to believe a witness, keep in mind that people sometimes hear or see things differently and sometimes forget things. You need to consider, therefore, whether a contradiction is an innocent misrecollection or lapse of memory or an intentional falsehood, and that may depend on whether it has to do with an important fact or only a small detail.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

In the previous instruction, I instructed you generally on the credibility of witnesses. I now give you this further instruction on how the credibility of a witness can be “impeached” and how you are to consider the testimony of certain witnesses.

A witness may be discredited or impeached by contradictory evidence; by a showing that the witness testified falsely concerning a material matter; by showing the witness has a motive to be untruthful; or by evidence that at some other time the witness has said or done something, or has failed to say or do something, that is inconsistent with the witness’s present testimony.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

You have heard testimony from persons described as experts. Persons who, by knowledge, skill, training, education or experience, have become expert in some field may state their opinions on matters in that field and may also state the reasons for their opinion.

Expert testimony should be considered just like any other testimony. You may accept or reject it, and give it as much weight as you think it deserves, considering the witness's education and experience, the soundness of the reasons given for the opinion, the acceptability of the methods used, and all the other evidence in the case.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

The government and the defendant have stipulated—that is, they have agreed—that certain facts are as counsel have stated. You must therefore treat those facts as having been proved.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

Exhibits have been admitted into evidence and are to be considered along with all the other evidence to assist you in reaching a verdict. You are not to tamper with the exhibits or their contents, and each exhibit should be returned into open court, along with your verdict, in the same condition as it was received by you.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

A reasonable doubt is a doubt based upon reason and common sense, and not the mere possibility of innocence. A reasonable doubt is the kind of doubt that would make a reasonable person hesitate to act. Proof beyond a reasonable doubt, therefore, must be proof of such a convincing character that a reasonable person would not hesitate to rely and act upon it. However, proof beyond a reasonable doubt does not mean proof beyond all possible doubt.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

The Indictment in this case charges on or about August 14, 2004, the defendant knowingly possessed, in and affecting commerce, a firearm, a Walther, model P22, .22 caliber pistol, serial number N023854, and ammunition, after having been previously convicted of a felony, that is a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

The defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charge.

As I told you at the beginning of the trial, an indictment is simply an accusation. It is not evidence of anything. To the contrary, the defendant is presumed to be innocent. Thus the defendant, even though charged, begins the trial with no evidence against him. The presumption of innocence alone is sufficient to find the defendant not guilty and can be overcome only if the government proves, beyond a reasonable doubt, each essential element of the crime charged.

There is no burden upon the defendant to prove that he is innocent. Accordingly, the fact that a defendant did not testify must not be considered by you in any way, or even discussed, in arriving at your verdict.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

The crime of possessing a firearm or ammunition after having been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, that is a felony offense, as charged in the Indictment, has three essential elements, which are:

- One*, the defendant had been convicted of a felony offense, that is a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year;
- Two*, the defendant thereafter knowingly possessed a firearm, that is a Walther, model P22, .22 caliber pistol, serial number N023854, or ammunition; and
- Three*, the firearm or ammunition was transported across a state line at some time before the defendant's possession of it.

You are instructed that the government and the defendant have stipulated, that is, agreed, that the defendant has been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than one year under the laws of the State of Illinois, and you must consider the first essential element as proven.

If you have found beyond a reasonable doubt that the firearm or ammunition was manufactured in a state other than Iowa, and that the defendant possessed that firearm or ammunition in Iowa, then you may, but are not required to, find that they were transported across a state line.

The term "firearm" means any weapon which will, or is designed to, or may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.

The government need not prove the defendant possessed both the firearm and ammunition; proof of possession of either is sufficient to convict. However, you must unanimously agree on which was possessed.

**(CONTINUED)**

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ (Cont'd)**

If all of these essential elements have been proved beyond a reasonable doubt, then you must find the defendant guilty of the crime of possessing a firearm or ammunition after previously having been convicted of a felony offense; otherwise you must find the defendant not guilty.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_**

It is not necessary for the government to prove the defendant knew that the firearm or ammunition charged in the Indictment have traveled in interstate commerce, he himself personally transported the firearm or ammunition in interstate commerce, or that he intended to violate a particular statute. Likewise, it is not necessary for the government to prove that the defendant knew that it was illegal to have the firearm or ammunition in his possession within the meaning of the law. Nor is it necessary for the government to prove who owned the firearm or ammunition at any time. The statute involved speaks in terms of possession, not ownership.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

The law recognizes several kinds of “possession.” A person may have actual possession or constructive possession. A person may have sole or joint possession.

A person who knowingly has direct physical control over a thing, at a given time, is then in “actual possession” of it.

A person who, although not in actual possession, knowingly has both the power and the intention at a given time to exercise dominion or control over a thing, either directly or through another person or persons, is then in “constructive possession” of it.

If one person alone has actual or constructive possession of a thing, possession is “sole.” If two or more persons share actual or constructive possession of a thing, possession is “joint.”

Whenever the word “possession” has been used in these instructions it includes “actual” as well as “constructive” possession and also “sole” as well as “joint” possession.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

You will note the Indictment charges that the offense was committed “on or about” certain dates. The government need not prove with certainty the exact date or the exact time period of the offense charged. It is sufficient if the evidence established that the offense occurred within a reasonable time of the date or period of time alleged by the Indictment.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER\_\_\_\_\_**

An act is done “knowingly” if the defendant realized what he was doing and did not act through ignorance, mistake or accident. The government is not required to prove that the defendant knew that his acts or omissions were unlawful. You may consider the evidence of the defendant’s acts and words, along with all other evidence, in deciding whether the defendant acted knowingly.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

Throughout the trial, you have been permitted to take notes. Your notes should be used only as memory aids, and you should not give your notes precedence over your independent recollection of the evidence.

In any conflict between your notes, a fellow juror's notes, and your memory, your memory must prevail. Remember that notes sometimes contain the mental impressions of the note taker and can be used only to help you recollect what the testimony was. At the conclusion of your deliberations, your notes should be left in the jury room for destruction.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

In conducting your deliberations and returning your verdict, there are certain rules you must follow. I shall list those rules for you now.

*First*, when you go to the jury room, you must select one of your members as your foreperson. That person will preside over your discussions and speak for you here in court.

*Second*, it is your duty, as jurors, to discuss this case with one another in the jury room. You should try to reach an agreement if you can do so without violence to individual judgment, because a verdict—whether guilty or not guilty—must be unanimous.

Each of you must make your own conscientious decision, but only after you have considered all the evidence, discussed it fully with your fellow jurors, and listened to the views of your fellow jurors.

Do not be afraid to change your opinions if the discussion persuades you that you should. But do not come to a decision simply because other jurors think it is right, or simply to reach a verdict.

*Third*, if the defendant is found guilty, the sentence to be imposed is my responsibility. You may not consider punishment in any way in deciding whether the government has proved its case beyond a reasonable doubt.

**(CONTINUED)**

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ (Cont'd)**

*Fourth*, if you need to communicate with me during your deliberations, you may send a note to me through the marshal or court security officer, signed by one or more jurors. I will respond as soon as possible either in writing or orally in open court. Remember that you should not tell anyone—including me—how your votes stand numerically.

*Finally*, your verdict must be based solely on the evidence and on the law which I have given to you in my instructions. The verdict, whether guilty or not guilty, must be unanimous. Nothing I have said or done is intended to suggest what your verdict should be—that is entirely for you to decide.

**INSTRUCTION NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_**

Attached to these instructions you will find the Verdict Form. The Verdict Form is simply the written notice of the decision that you reach in this case. The answers to the Verdict Form must be the unanimous decision of the jury.

You will take the Verdict Form to the jury room, and when you have completed your deliberations and each of you has agreed on an answer to the Verdict Form, your foreperson will fill out the Form, sign and date it, and advise the marshal or court security officer that you are ready to return to the courtroom.

Finally, members of the jury, take this case and give it your most careful consideration, and then without fear or favor, prejudice or bias of any kind, return such verdict as accords with the evidence and these instructions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**LINDA R. READE  
JUDGE, U. S. DISTRICT COURT**

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA  
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

RONALD DONELSON,

Defendant.

No. CR 05-0020-LRR

**VERDICT FORM**

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**FIREARM**

We, the Jury, find the defendant, Ronald Donelson, \_\_\_\_\_ of the crime  
Not Guilty/Guilty  
of possessing a firearm on or about August 14, 2004, after previously having been  
convicted of a felony offense.

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FOREPERSON

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DATE

**(CONTINUED)**

**AMMUNITION**

We, the Jury, find the defendant, Ronald Donelson, \_\_\_\_\_ of the crime  
Not Guilty/Guilty  
of possessing ammunition on or about August 14, 2004, after previously having been  
convicted of a felony offense.

\_\_\_\_\_  
FOREPERSON

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE