

AREAS OF PRACTICE

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Prince George's County Drug Charges Yield 20 Year Sentence

Sometimes, people find themselves charged with the same type of crime again and again. When standing with a repeat offender at sentencing, a [Maryland criminal attorney](#) often sees that a history of prior convictions can remove any leniency a judge might consider granting. The recent sentencing of a Prince George's County man convicted of drug charges is a perfect example.

Rodney Erik Bryant, 32, pleaded guilty in October to possession of narcotics with intent to distribute and to possession of a firearm by a felon. Bryant's plea came in response to his December 2008 arrest after police raided his home based on a tip from a confidential informant. As they searched his home, police discovered a number of illegal substances and products, including several hundred grams of cocaine, over a kilogram of marijuana, heroin, drug paraphernalia, and a pistol.

At his sentencing, Judge Alexander Williams, Jr., of the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, noted Bryant's criminal history and record of prior convictions and enhanced his sentence to 20 years in prison for his drug possession and firearm convictions. Bryant's [Maryland criminal lawyer](#) had no comment on the judge's decision.

Bryant's criminal history dates back over 16 years to his juvenile record. He has been previously convicted of possession with intent to distribute as well as other drug-related charges, armed carjacking, and assault.

While some judges are inclined to show leniency to first offenders, they often have little patience for repeat offenders. When a judge notes that a person has a lengthy criminal history or that he or she has been repeatedly convicted of the same crime, the judge may assume that the criminal history is an indication that the accused is likely to continue to commit the offense. A [Maryland criminal attorney](#) knows that sentencing guidelines are just that--guidelines--and that a judge has discretion to show leniency or to enhance penalties after a guilty verdict.