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November 10, 2004

**SEVEN ROCKFORD MEN SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON ON
FEDERAL GUN DEALING AND/OR DRUG TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; RICHARD W. SANDERS, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration; PAUL LOGLI, Winnebago County State’s Attorney; RICHARD MEYERS, Winnebago County Sheriff; and STEVEN PUGH, Rockford Police Chief, today made the following announcement:

United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard today sentenced **ANTHONY THOMPSON, also known as “Nook”**, 36, (DOB: 8/9/68), formerly of 2103 Elm Street, Rockford, Illinois, to 188 months in prison without parole for dealing in firearms without a license, and distributing 19.4 grams of cocaine base (“crack” cocaine). Thompson was also ordered to serve eight years of supervised release upon his release from imprisonment.

In pleading guilty, Anthony Thompson (“Thompson”) admitted that he operated the Broadway Exchange & Trading Post (“Broadway Exchange”), 1229 Broadway, Rockford, Illinois, with the assistance of others, including co-defendants Charles Lewis and Charles D. Spears. Thompson further admitted that, through the Broadway Exchange, he bought and sold property, including firearms, some of which were stolen.

Thompson admitted in his plea agreement that from at least March 19, 2003, to at least May 9, 2003, he illegally purchased and sold firearms without a license. As Thompson acknowledged in the plea agreement, neither he, the Broadway Exchange, nor any of his co-defendants were licensed to deal in firearms. Thompson himself was prohibited from obtaining a Federal Firearms Dealer’s License due to his status as a convicted felon. Thompson specifically admitted that between March 19, 2003 and May 9, 2003, he and his co-defendants illegally sold a total of eight guns, including: a Ruger .22 caliber revolver with three rounds of ammunition; a .22 caliber single shot pen gun; a Ruger Model MK II .22 caliber pistol; an Iver Johnson .32 caliber revolver; a US revolver; a Remington Model 1100 12-gauge shotgun; a MAADI Egyptian AK-47 rifle; and, a .22 caliber single shot pen gun. Thompson admitted in his plea agreement that he knew many of the firearms he sold were going to be transferred to a local street gang due to their ongoing rivalry with another local street gang.

Thompson also admitted that on two separate occasions he sold crack cocaine. Specifically, Thompson admitted that he sold 2.8 grams of crack on April 11, 2003 and 16.6 grams of crack on April 16, 2003.

Other participants in this matter were also sentenced by Judge Reinhard as follows:

CHARLES LEWIS, also known as “Hawk”, 25 (DOB: 6/30/79), pleaded guilty on June 3, 2004, to aiding and abetting dealing in firearms without a license, and possession of an unregistered firearm. Lewis was sentenced on September 13, 2004 to 75 months in federal prison without parole, and three years of supervised release following his release from prison.

CHARLES SPEARS, 33, (DOB: 3/17/71), formerly of 428 Foster, Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty on June 1, 2004, to aiding and abetting dealing in firearms without a license, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Spears was sentenced on August 13, 2004 to 102 months in federal prison without parole, and three years of supervised release following his release from prison.

JOHNNIE THOMPSON, SR., 44, (DOB: 2/15/60), formerly of 1436 Andrews Street, Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty on June 25, 2004, to distributing 6.2 grams of crack cocaine, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Thompson was sentenced on October 8, 2004, to 120 months in federal prison without parole, and eight years of supervised release following his release from prison.

HENRY WEBB, also known as “Hank”, 52, (DOB: 8/15/52), formerly of 1018 Broadway, Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty on June 9, 2004, to aiding and abetting dealing in firearms without a license, and selling a firearm and ammunition to a convicted felon. Webb was sentenced on September 10, 2004, to three years of probation.

In a related indictment, three men were sentenced to federal prison:

BILLY RAY THOMPSON, 47, (DOB: 12/31/56), formerly of 542 Waveland Avenue, Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty on May 27, 2004, to dealing in firearms without a license, and distributing 7.5 grams of crack cocaine. Thompson was sentenced on August 23, 2004, to 96 months in federal prison without parole, and eight years of supervised release following his release from prison.

CHARLES L. SHERMAN, 48, (DOB: 5/8/56), formerly of 542 Waveland Avenue, Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty on May 27, 2004, to distributing 7.5 grams of crack cocaine. Sherman was sentenced on August 20, 2004 to 72 months in federal prison without parole, and five years of supervised release following his release from prison.

DARRELL YOHO, 42, (DOB: 11/15/61), formerly of 1113 16th Avenue, Rockford, Illinois, pleaded guilty on August 2, 2004, to being a felon in possession of a firearm. Yoho was sentenced as an Armed Career Criminal on October 4, 2004, to 180 months in prison without parole, and five years of supervised release following his release from prison.

The charges were the result of a cooperative effort of the law enforcement agencies named above in furtherance of the Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an intensive, cooperative effort between local, state, and federal law enforcement to attack gun crimes. The cornerstone of the program is that every gun violation will be reviewed for possible federal prosecution in order to obtain the harshest penalties for the worst offenders. Additional information about Project Safe Neighborhoods may be found at www.psn.gov.

The case was investigated by Rockford offices of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and the Drug Enforcement Administration, Winnebago County Sheriff’s Police, and the Rockford Police Department. The federal cases were prosecuted in United States District Court by Assistant United States Attorney Michael F. Iasparro.

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