



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

Tampa

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SEFFNER MAN INDICTED FOR GAS STATION ROBBERY

Tampa, FL - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill today announced the return of an indictment of Decoursey Thephalus Beckles, a 24-year-old resident of Seffner, charging him with armed robbery, being a felon in possession of a firearm, and discharging a firearm during the course of a crime of violence. The maximum penalty Beckles faces if convicted on the robbery charge is a term of imprisonment of up to 20 years. The felon in possession of firearm charge is punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to 10 years. Discharging a firearm during the course of a crime of violence is punishable by a mandatory term of imprisonment of 10 years, and a maximum term of life imprisonment, which sentence must be imposed to run consecutive to any sentence imposed on the other two charges.

On June 16, 2008, Beckles allegedly entered a Citgo Gas Station located at 11305 Highway 92 East in Seffner and demanded money. It is further alleged that as he left with the stolen cash, he fired four shots into the ceiling of the store.

This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill, along with Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge, ATF Tampa Field Division, is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District

of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials. The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jeffrey S. Downing.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.