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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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SERIAL TRUCK HIJACKER SENTENCED TO FOURTEEN YEARS

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Allen F. Loucks, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announces that today U.S. District Court Judge J. Frederick Motz sentenced Patrick Percy Johnson, age 29, of Baltimore, Maryland, to 167 months in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release in connection with Johnson's organization and participation in a series of violent truck hijackings in the Baltimore area. Johnson pled guilty on December 17, 2004 to kidnaping and robbery charges.

According to an agreed statement of facts, Johnson admitting to recruiting two co-defendants, Tobias Ely Preston, age 22, and Larry Joseph Mason, age 19, to hijack trucks beginning in October 2003. The first hijacking took place on October 23, 2003, near Wilmington, Delaware, during which Johnson, Preston and Mason seized a delivery truck and a victim driver and transported the truck back to the Baltimore area, where it was offloaded. During the second robbery on November 6, 2003, Johnson and Mason seized a second truck, this time near Bel Air, Maryland, and again took the driver prisoner while the truck was offloaded. The third and last robbery occurred near Baltimore on February 11, 2004 and was committed by Johnson and Preston.

During each hijacking, the hijackers seized the driver as he was preparing to offload goods from his truck. The driver was handcuffed and blindfolded and forced to accompany the hijackers as they transported the trucks throughout the Baltimore area. After the truck inventory - typically including cigarettes, candy and convenience store goods - was removed, the truck and the handcuffed driver were abandoned by the hijackers. The abandoned victims in each instance obtained help from passers-by or by calling for help on their cell-phones.

In connection with the robberies, Preston and Mason both pled guilty and were sentenced on robbery charges, for which Preston received 96 months and Mason received 60 months.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Baltimore County Police Department and the Bel Air City Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Michael C. Hanlon.