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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DEANDRE WHITEHEAD PLEADS GUILTY TO
SOLICITATION TO COMMIT WITNESS TAMPERING**

Baltimore, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Allen F. Loucks announces that today Deandre Whitehead, age 20, of Baltimore, Maryland pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge Catherine C. Blake to solicitation to commit witness tampering.

According to the agreed statement of facts presented to the court, on August 16, 2003 Whitehead was arrested and charged with the August 10, 2003 murder of Russell Peterson in Baltimore, Maryland. Subsequently, Whitehead was housed in the Baltimore City Detention Center. Sometime after August 29, 2003 Whitehead approached Byron James, another inmate in the jail, and solicited him to kill two witnesses to the Peterson murder. On September 9, 2003 the Maryland State Police placed a recording device in the bullpen area of the Baltimore City Detention Center. Correctional officers observed Whitehead providing James with a note containing a physical description of one of the witnesses, and the phone number, address and name of Whitehead's girlfriend who was to provide an unspecified amount of money to James on behalf of Whitehead as payment for his services.

On September 16 and 23, 2003 the Maryland State Police caused an undercover officer to be introduced to Whitehead's girlfriend. During both of these meetings Whitehead's girlfriend indicated that she had been in contact with Whitehead about the witnesses, but had no money to give to the undercover officer. Further attempts to contact Whitehead's girlfriend were not successful.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, the parties have agreed to ask the court to sentence Whitehead to 70 months in prison. Judge Blake scheduled sentencing for June 15, 2005.

This case is the result of a joint investigation by the Baltimore City Police Department, the Maryland State Police and the United States Attorney's Office. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney's Debra L. Dwyer and Christine Manuelian.