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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TWO DEFENDANTS SENTENCED ON FEDERAL CONVICTIONS
ARISING FROM UNDERCOVER STOREFRONT INVESTIGATION**

AUGUSTA, Ga. – Edmund A. Booth, Jr., United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced that two defendants convicted of federal crimes arising from the successful undercover storefront operation entitled “Augusta Ink,” were sentenced on March 16, 2009 in U.S. District Court in Augusta. Darren Rouse, 18, and Vincent White, 22 each appeared before U.S. District Judge Dudley H. Bowen, Jr. who handed down the sentences.

Booth noted that Rouse, who had earlier pled guilty to possession of a stolen firearm in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(j) and distribution of cocaine base (crack), in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1), was sentenced to 96 months imprisonment, 5 years of supervised release, a \$2400 fine, and a \$200 special assessment.

Booth further noted that White, who had earlier pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute scheduled I and II controlled substances, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846, and possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c), was sentenced to 144 months imprisonment, 5 years of supervised release, a \$ 4800 fine, and a \$ 200 special assessment.

Booth stated that there is only one convicted defendant remaining to be sentenced and the federal prosecutions arising from the successful 16-month undercover operation conducted out of the

“Colur Tyme” Tattoo Parlor on Tobacco Road in Hephzibah, Georgia will be concluded. Sheriff Ronald Strength and the Richmond County Sheriff’s Office initiated the undercover operation in the Summer of 2006, and within a few months, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives joined in the operation, bringing additional resources and personnel to assist in the effort. Undercover agents and detectives posed as owners and employees of the business who were interested in making illegal firearms and drug purchases from the criminal element. During the undercover operation, agents and officers purchased over 330 firearms to include, handguns, rifles, assault rifles, shotguns and sawed-off shot guns, along with narcotics and stolen cars.

Booth commented that these cases were federally prosecuted as part of the district’s Anti-Gang initiative and the Project Ceasefire initiative, a program devoted to reducing gun violence by prosecuting individuals found in possession of firearms who cannot legally possess them, such as felons and drug dealers. The Government was represented in these prosecutions by Assistant United States Attorneys Nancy C. Greenwood and Patricia G. Johnson.

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