



**U. S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney*  
**George E. B. Holding**

*Eastern District of North Carolina*

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**WEDNESDAY - October 8, 2008**

**BINGO ROBBER SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT**

**RALEIGH** - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that today in federal court United States District Judge James C. Dever, III, sentenced **ROBERT HAMPTON TAYLOR**, 52, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, to life imprisonment plus 120 months to be served consecutively followed by five years supervised release for possession of a firearm in furtherance of a conspiracy to commit robbery and felon in possession of a firearm. Restitution in the amount of \$8,802.19 was also imposed.

On March 26, 2007, **TAYLOR** and his co-defendant, Steven Craig Bethea, traveled to the Kato Bingo Hall, located at 6113 Yadkin Road in Fayetteville, North Carolina to rob it. Fayetteville Police Officer Douglas Austin, who was on routine patrol, observed **TAYLOR** and Bethea in a vehicle bearing a fictitious tag. Officer Austin activated his blue lights in an attempt to stop the vehicle. **TAYLOR** crashed the vehicle, and Bethea grabbed a firearm and fled on foot. Bethea was captured a few hours later and his firearm was found. Officer Austin was shot and beaten in the head by **TAYLOR**, which resulted in Officer Austin receiving 22 staples in his head.

Mr. Holding stated, ***"I can think of no more serious crime than the attack of a police officer who is discharging his duties. This sentence removes a dangerous predator from our streets. We commend Officer Austin for his courage and bravery and thank him for his distinguished service to the people of Fayetteville and the Eastern District of North Carolina."***

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, America's Network Against Gun Violence. Investigation of the case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Fayetteville Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Jane Jackson served as prosecutor for the government.

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