



PRESS RELEASE

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COCOA MAN CHARGED WITH ARMED ROBBERIES, WEAPONS OFFENSES

ORLANDO - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced a twelve-count indictment charging a Cocoa man, **Ronald Bernard Mills**, age 38, with bank robbery (Counts One and Ten); use of a firearm during a crime of violence (Counts Two, Five, Eight and Eleven); possession of ammunition by a convicted felon (Counts Three, Six, Nine and Twelve); and interference with commerce by threats of violence (Counts Four and Seven). Counts One and Ten of the indictment carry a maximum prison sentence of 25 years; Count Two carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years consecutive to any other sentence; Counts Five, Eight and Eleven each carry a maximum prison sentence of 25 years consecutive to any other sentence; Counts Three, Six, Nine and Twelve carry a minimum mandatory prison sentence of fifteen years; and, Counts Four and Seven carry a maximum prison sentence of 20 years.

According to the indictment, Mills robbed Brevard County branches of Space Coast Credit Union and Bank of America, as well as convenience stores belonging to Amerada Hess Corporation and 7-11 Corporation, between October 11 and October 18, 2002. During these offenses, Mills possessed a loaded R&G Industries .22 caliber revolver. As

a previously convicted felon, Mills was prohibited from possessing ammunition contained inside of the gun that had traveled in interstate commerce.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"), the Cocoa Police Department, the Rockledge Police Department, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement ("FDLE") and the Orange County Sheriff's Office. 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 and Firearms (ATF). United States Attorney Paul Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials and calling our effort "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!" 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 will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr. and Special Assistant United States Attorney Gregory J. Konieczka.

An indictment is merely an allegation that a crime has been committed. A defendant is presumed innocent until the entry of a guilty plea or until the defendant is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.