



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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**PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENDANT CONVICTED OF
FELON IN POSSESSION OF AMMUNITION**

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced that Marvin Edward Ross, age 28, was found guilty on September 9, 2003 by a federal jury in Tampa on a one count Indictment charging him with being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. The count on which the defendant was found guilty carries a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment, a fine up to \$250,000 and a three-year term of supervised release. A sentencing date has been set for November 25, 2003.

The defendant was indicted on April 4, 2002. The indictment charged that on or about December 6, 2001, at Lakeland, Florida, the defendant, a convicted felon, possessed a Ruger 9mm pistol and a box of Winchester ammunition.

According to testimony and evidence presented at trial, the defendant was spotted at 4:30 in the morning by a Polk County Deputy on patrol, and he tried to hide himself behind a tree. The deputy called the defendant over and after an investigation, a box of ammunition was found near the tree and a firearm was found at the foot of the tree where the defendant was trying to conceal himself. The ground around where the defendant was

concealing himself was wet with the heavy morning dew, while the gun and box of ammunition were dry. The defendant gave a false name, a false date of birth and a false story about why he was out so late. A bystander told the deputy the defendant's real name. The deputy then learned that the defendant had a warrant for his arrest and was a convicted felon. The deputy then arrested the defendant for numerous charges, including being a felon in possession of a firearm.

This is another case indicted 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, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). U. S. Attorney Paul I. 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 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Polk County Sheriffs Office investigated this case, with the full cooperation of the State Attorney's Office for the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Florida. Assistant United States Attorney John F. Rudy, III prosecuted the case.