



**PRESS RELEASE**  
*Office of the United States Attorney  
Middle District of Florida*

**PAUL I. PEREZ**  
**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

400 North Tampa Street  
Suite 3200  
Tampa, Florida 33602  
813/274-6000  
813/274-6300 (Fax)

Post Office Box 600  
200 West Forsyth Street  
Jacksonville, Florida 32201  
904/232-2682  
904/232-2620 (Fax)

80 North Hughey Avenue,  
Room 201  
Orlando, Florida 32801  
407/648-7500  
407/648-7643 (Fax)

2110 First Street,  
Suite 3-137  
Fort Myers, Florida 33901  
239/461-2200  
239/461-2219 (Fax)

Contact: Steve Cole ♦ Public Affairs Specialist ♦ 813/274-6352

**For Immediate Release**

September 25, 2003

**ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL SENTENCED TO 140 MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT IN**  
**"PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS" FIREARMS CASE**

U.S. District Court Judge Gregory A. Presnell today sentenced **SAMUEL WATSON**, 25, of Oviedo, to a term of imprisonment of 140 months in connection with his possession of a firearm on April 16, 2003. Watson previously had entered a guilty plea to the offense of possession of a firearm by a prohibited person on June 27, 2003. Watson also will be required to serve 5 years on supervised release, perform 50 hours of community service, and pay a \$100 special assessment.

According to facts adopted by the Court at sentencing, Watson possessed two firearms, a Ruger Mini-14 rifle and a Norinco MAK-90 Sporter rifle, when he was arrested by federal agents on an outstanding warrant on September 5, 2002. Watson has prior felony convictions in the State of Florida for Carrying a Concealed Weapon, Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Fleeing & Eluding and Possession of Cocaine. As a previously convicted felon, he is prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law and is considered an armed career criminal because of the nature of his prior convictions.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the Seminole County State Attorney's Office, Oviedo Police

Department, Seminole County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"). The case was prosecuted as part of the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods," a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative aimed at reducing violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws. United States Attorney Paul I. Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials as "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!"

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr.