



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

Eastern District of North Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
TUESDAY - April 22, 2008

BINGO ROBBER PLEADS GUILTY

RALEIGH - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that yesterday in federal court **ROBERT HAMPTON TAYLOR**, 52, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, pled guilty before United States District Judge James C. Dever, III, to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a conspiracy to commit robbery, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 924(c), and felon in possession of a firearm in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g).

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. **TAYLOR** faces up to five years imprisonment nor more than life

imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 on the 924(c) charge and up to 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 on the felon in possession charge. If deemed an Armed Career Criminal, he could receive a maximum term of life imprisonment.

Mr. Holding stated, ***"I want to commend the bravery of Officer Douglas Austin who was shot and beaten while trying to arrest this defendant. Fortunately, Officer Austin was wearing protective gear, survived and is recovering. However, this case is yet another chilling demonstration of the need for our Project Safe Neighborhoods Program. Repeat offenders walking the streets of our communities, and armed, is unacceptable and our aggressive Project Safe Neighborhoods Program will continue to target them."***

Sentencing is set for July 21, 2008.

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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