



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

Eastern District of North Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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FAYETTEVILLE MAN RECEIVES 21 YEARS IN PRISON
IN AVERTED BINGO PARLOR ROBBERY

RALEIGH - United States Attorney George E.B. Holding announced that in federal court today United States District Judge James C. Dever, III, sentenced **STEVEN CRAIG BETHEA**, 40, of Fayetteville, North Carolina, to 252 months' imprisonment followed by 5 years of supervised release and imposed \$8,802.19 in restitution 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)(1).

On March 26, 2007, **BETHEA** and Robert Hampton Taylor 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 **BETHEA** and Robert Hampton Taylor 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. **BETHEA was deemed an Armed Career Criminal.**

Mr. Holding stated, "*The Eastern District of North Carolina remains committed to zero tolerance for gun crimes and to vigorously prosecuting violent offenders who commit crimes with guns.*"

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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