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**ELKTON MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DISTRIBUTION OF CRACK COCAINE**

**Baltimore**, Maryland - Schawn Helm, age 33, of Elkton, Maryland, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 50 grams or more of crack cocaine, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

According to the plea agreement, from September 2006 up to and including April 2007, Helm sold crack cocaine from various locations in Maryland, including the Boyd's Motel located at 701 E. Pulaski Highway in Elkton, Maryland. Helm sold over 50 grams of crack cocaine on a weekly basis. On December 31, 2006, officers responded to the Boyd's Motel after complaints from a victim that Helm fired a gun next to her head. Once the police arrived at the motel, they identified and detained Helm and asked if they could search his room. Helm agreed as long as he could be present for the search. Officers recovered a loaded Smith and Wesson, 40 caliber pistol in Helm's room, along with plastic bags of crack cocaine. Officers also located a drug scale and drug packaging materials.

On January 2, 2007, officers conducted a search of Helm's car and located a second digital scale, two cell phones, and several plastic bags used for drug trafficking. On April 4, 2007, officers stopped Helm driving his vehicle. Helm was driving the vehicle with suspended registration and had a suspended license. During an inventory search of the vehicle, officers recovered an additional 9.4 grams of crack cocaine, a portable scale, and other zip lock bags. Helm was subsequently indicted on federal charges and arrested on May 23, 2007.

Helm faces a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison followed by five years of supervised release. U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake has scheduled sentencing for December 19, 2007 at 9:15 a.m. Helm remains in federal custody pending his sentencing.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Elkton Police Department for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Kwame J. Manley, who is prosecuting the case.