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**ELKTON MAN SENTENCED TO OVER 21 YEARS FOR
DISTRIBUTION OF CRACK COCAINE**

Baltimore, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced Schawn Helm, age 33, of Elkton, Maryland, today to 21 years 10 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for 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 his plea agreement, from September 2006 up to and including April 2007, Helm sold crack cocaine from locations in Maryland, including a motel in Elkton, Maryland. Helm sold over 50 grams of crack cocaine on a weekly basis. On December 31, 2006, officers responded to the 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.

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 prosecuted the case.