



U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Kansas

## NEWS RELEASE

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## OSKALOOSA, KANSAS MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO GUN CHARGES

TOPEKA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **John Patrick Hargis**, 33, Oskaloosa, Kansas, entered a guilty plea today before U.S. District Judge Sam A. Crow to one count of **being a felon in possession of a firearm and one count of making a false written statement to a firearms dealer to obtain a firearm.**

Melgren said that Hargis admitted at his plea that October 4, 2003, he possessed a .22 caliber revolver. Hargis also admitted that on November 7, 2003, in Ozawkie, Kansas, the mother of two minor children, ages 11 and 7, confronted him about his alleged sexual assault of her children. Hargis admitted that he threatened the mother with a revolver, that he broke the revolver when he slammed it down on the kitchen table and that he left the residence before the Jefferson County Sheriff's deputies arrived. Hargis admitted that later the same day, he contacted a friend and asked the friend to purchase a pistol for him from "The Pawn Market" in Topeka, Kansas, and instructed the friend to make a false statement to the firearms dealer representing to the dealer that the friend was actually buying the firearm. Hargis admitted that the friend also purchased ammunition for him and met him in a motel in Kansas City, Kansas, where he was given the firearm and the ammunition. Hargis further admitted that in the following days he moved from motel to motel in a variety of cities in and around Jefferson County to avoid apprehension for the criminal sexual abuse allegations and that he possessed the pistol and the ammunition during this time. Hargis further admitted that he was convicted in 1995 of aggravated sexual battery, a felony, in Wyandotte County, Kansas, and in 2000 he was convicted of attempting to traffic in contraband at a correctional institution, a felony, in Wyandotte County, Kansas.

Hargis faces a maximum of ten years in federal prison, without parole, on each count. Sentencing is set for November 17, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

Melgren commended the excellent work of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in this investigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Hough in this prosecution.

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“This is an excellent example of how Project Safe Neighborhoods uses federal gun laws to remove violent felons from our communities,” Melgren said. “The U.S. Attorney’s Office in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute these cases.”