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NEWS RELEASE

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August 25, 2004

ABILENE, KANSAS, MAN CHARGED WITH BEING A FELON IN POSSESSION OF FIREARMS AND OTHER GUN CHARGES

TOPEKA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced today that **Christopher Lee Grimes**, 23, Abilene, Kansas, was charged on August 19, 2004, by a federal grand jury with 4 counts of being in possession of firearms after having been convicted of felony offenses; 4 counts of being in possession of firearms after having been convicted of domestic violence offenses; and 4 counts of knowingly selling or disposing of firearms knowing that the firearms were stolen.

Melgren said that Grimes was arrested on August 23, 2004, in Abilene, Kansas, by the ATF, and he made his initial appearance on August 24, 2004, before U.S. Magistrate Judge K. Gary Sebelius in U.S. District Court in Topeka, Kansas. Grimes waived a detention hearing and was ordered detained pending trial. Grimes is next scheduled to appear before the Honorable Richard D. Rogers, Senior U.S. District Judge, on October 1, 2004, at 9:30 a.m., for hearing on pre-trial motions.

The indictment alleges that on July 25, 2003, Grimes illegally possessed two rifles and a shotgun, after previously having been convicted of felony offenses and of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence; and that on the same date he sold or disposed of those same firearms, which were stolen. The indictment further alleges that on August 5, 2003, Grimes illegally possessed a semi-automatic pistol and three revolvers, after previously having been convicted of felony offenses and of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence; and that on the same date he sold or disposed of those same firearms, which were stolen. The indictment alleges that on August 12, 2003, Grimes illegally possessed three semi-automatic pistols, after previously having been convicted of felony offenses and of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence; and that on the same date he sold or disposed of those same firearms, which were stolen. Finally, the indictment further alleges that on September 9, 2003, Grimes illegally possessed a rifle, a shotgun, and a revolver, after previously having been convicted of felony offenses and of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence; and that on the same date he sold or disposed of those same firearms, which were stolen, all in Dickinson County, Kansas.

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If convicted, Grimes faces a maximum of ten years in federal prison, without parole, on each count.

The case was investigated by the Abilene Police Department, the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, with the assistance of the Dickinson County Attorney. This prosecution was referred to the United States Attorney's Office by Dickinson County Attorney Kristi Hildebrand, because of the increased severity of the penalties for firearms violations under federal law, as opposed to the lesser penalties available under state law. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, United States Attorney's Offices across the country accept referrals of these very types of cases in an effort to punish as severely as possible those individuals who choose to violate federal gun laws. U.S. Attorney Melgren expressed his appreciation for the efforts and cooperation of county attorneys, such as Ms. Hildebrand in this case, in referring these cases for prosecution in federal court.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.