



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAWN SHOP OWNER PLEADS GUILTY TO VIOLATING FEDERAL FIREARMS LAW

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that the owner of a Marshfield, Mo., pawn shop has pleaded guilty in federal court to illegally possessing two sawed-off shotguns.

William Earl Gates, 62, of Mountain Grove, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr on Oct. 27, 2004. **Gates**, who is the owner of Gator's Pawn, 619 S. Marshall in Marshfield, had been scheduled to begin trial today on charges contained in an Aug. 11, 2004, superseding indictment.

By pleading guilty, **Gates** admitted that he was in possession of a Harrington and Richardson .410-gauge shotgun and a Savage .410-gauge shotgun, both with illegal barrel lengths shorter than 18 inches and neither of which were registered to **Gates** in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

Under federal statutes, **Gates** could be subject to a sentence of up to 10 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Monroe. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Webster County, Mo., Sheriff's Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow