



NEWS RELEASE

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**FORMER MCLAUGHLIN YOUTH CENTER COUNSELOR INDICTED BY FEDERAL GRAND
JURY ON CHARGES OF DISTRIBUTING CRACK COCAINE NEAR THE YOUTH CENTER**

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Karen L. Loeffler announced that on May 11, 2009, Edward Jamal Mason, a resident of Anchorage, Alaska, was arraigned in federal court in Anchorage on charges of distribution of controlled substances in or near a school.

The four-count indictment named Mason, age 31, as the sole defendant.

According to the indictment, Mason, sold crack cocaine on four separate occasions during 2008. Two of those drug deals took place near the McLaughlin Youth Center (MYC), where Mason was working as a counselor. As a counselor for MYC, Mason was responsible for supervising juveniles at the center. The McLaughlin Youth Center is operated by the State of Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice. The mission of the Division of Juvenile Justice is to hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior, promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities, and assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime.

U.S. Magistrate Judge John D. Roberts ordered that Mason be detained in federal custody pending trial. The court set a trial date of July 13, 2009. Special Assistant United States Attorney Erin E. White, who presented the case to the grand jury, indicated that the law provides for a maximum total sentence of life in prison, a fine of \$8,000,000, or both. The actual sentence imposed will be based upon the seriousness of the offense and the prior criminal history of the defendant.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Safe Streets Task Force, comprised of Anchorage police officers and FBI agents, conducted the investigation leading to the indictment in this case. SAUSA White is one of two prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney's Office who are funded by the Municipality of Anchorage for the purpose of prosecuting gang-related and violent crime cases.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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