



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

Public Affairs
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SHANK GETS PRISON INMATE 33 MONTHS EXTRA TIME

TUCSON, Ariz. – Joseph William Nichols, 31, of Tucson, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge David C. Bury to 33 months in federal prison, to be served following his sentence for bank robbery. Nichols pleaded guilty on August 13, 2009 to possessing contraband in prison.

Nichols was an inmate at the Federal Penitentiary in Tucson, serving a 66-month sentence for Bank Robbery committed in the Northern District of Texas. On August 12, 2007, Nichols was assigned to the kitchen staff. A kitchen supervisor employed by the Bureau of Prisons saw Nichols pull down his shirt, noticed he was acting suspicious and appeared to have something hidden in his pants. She told him to remove the item from his pants, but Nichols refused.

The supervisor left the kitchen area and returned with other employees to secure the kitchen. Agents later found a 6-inch long, plastic shank, made from a plastic chair in his cell, hidden in the hemline of Nichols' pants. A search of the kitchen revealed two packages hidden under an upside down pan on a table. The packages contained contraband including five serrated, 6-inch knife blades; nine box-cutter razor blades, 10 syringes with hypodermic needles, three tubes of super glue, four rolls of marijuana weighing a total of 96.1 grams, a cellular phone and charger, eight photographs depicting sexually explicit images of a woman's genitals, two disposable lighters and two packages of chewing gum.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Prisons Special Investigative Supervisor, the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution was handled by Sandra M. Hansen, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-08-1374-TUC-DCB
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