



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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**BREVARD COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG TRAFFICKING,
FIREARMS, AND ARMED ROBBERY CHARGES**

Orlando, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that Darnell Watson (age 21, of Palm Bay) pleaded guilty today to distributing cocaine, possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense, interfering with commerce by robbery, and possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. Watson faces a minimum penalty of 30 years in federal prison and a maximum penalty of life.

According to the plea agreement, during February and March 2008, Watson made several sales of cocaine and firearms to a confidential source and an undercover agent working with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). On April 16, 2008, during the investigation into Watson's gun and drug trafficking, Watson and an accomplice walked into a Pizza Hut restaurant located at 868 Jupiter Boulevard in Palm Bay with a shotgun and an assault-style rifle. They ordered the restaurant's employees to the ground, emptied the cash register, and left. Officers with the Palm Bay Police Department arrested Watson. After the arrest, they found a shotgun and rifle hidden in the attic of a house at which Watson was staying.

This case was investigated by ATF and the Palm Bay Police Department. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Vincent S. Chiu.

This is another case prosecuted as a part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" program - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative supported by ATF. United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton, along with Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge, ATF Tampa Field Division, is coordinating the Project Safe Neighborhoods effort here in the Middle District of Florida, in cooperation with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials. The program's objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders.
