



Department of Justice

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JACKSONVILLE MAN ARRESTED IN MIAMI ON GUN CHARGES

Jacksonville, FL- United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announces the unsealing of an indictment charging Rodwick Dowston (age 29, Jacksonville) with theft of firearms from a licensed dealer, possession of firearms by a convicted felon and possession of stolen firearms. If convicted on all counts, Dowston faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in federal prison.

According to the indictment, Dowston broke into Shooters of Jacksonville, Inc., a firearms retailer, and stole 17 firearms. Dowston has prior felony convictions for grand theft and firearm possession by a convicted felon.

According to state court records, Dowston broke into Shooters in the early morning hours of June 22, 2008, and led officers on a high speed chase before wrecking his car. Dowston was found hiding in a dumpster. All 17 firearms were recovered. The Department of Justice authorized the successive prosecution of Dowston, even though he had been acquitted in state court.

Dowston was arrested by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives at the Miami Airport when he attempted to enter the United States on Wednesday this week. Dowston was traveling to the United States from the Dominican Republic.

This is another case prosecuted as a part of the Department of Justice's "Project Safe Neighborhoods" program - a nationwide, gun-violence reduction strategy led by ATF. United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill, 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.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated jointly by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Frank Talbot.