



PRESS NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ROCK HILL FELON PLEADS GUILTY TO POSSESSING REVOLVER

COLUMBIA, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney, W. Walter Wilkins, stated today that Melvin Lewis Rhinehart, age 34, of Rock Hill, pled guilty before United States District Judge Cameron M. Currie to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Rhinehart was the passenger in a car stopped for a traffic violation in the city of Rock Hill on January 30, 2009, by an officer with the Rock Hill City Police Department. The officer approached and smelled marijuana coming from the car. As a result, the officer asked the driver and Rhinehart to step out of the car. Rhinehart was asked if he had any firearms, and he admitted he had a .32 caliber revolver in his waistband.

Rhinehart's criminal record includes drug and assault charges dating back to 1994, and he is prohibited by federal law from possessing a firearm.

Rhinehart will be sentenced in December after a presentence report is prepared by the United States Probation Office. Rhinehart faces a mandatory minimum of 15 years to life imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000.

United States Attorney Wilkins stated the case was investigated by officers from the Rock Hill City Police Department and agents from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Assistant United States Attorney, Robert C. Jendron, Jr. was assigned to prosecute the case.