



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Grand Rapids, Michigan – June 28, 2007** – United States Attorney Charles R. Gross announced that Christopher Scott Atkinson, age 46, of Muskegon, Michigan, was convicted by a jury today of both counts of a two-count indictment. The first count of the indictment charged him with being a felon in possession of a firearm, and the second count charged him with being a felon in possession of ammunition. Both offenses are violations of Title 18, United States Code Section 922(g)(1). The maximum penalty for each count is ten years' imprisonment.

This case arose from a report of an assault on September 25, 2004. The Muskegon Police Department received two 911 telephone calls at a few minutes before midnight on that date, reporting that a man had struck a woman in the 1800 block of McIlwraith Street in Muskegon, Michigan. During the assault, the defendant struck his girlfriend with a revolver, and he broke out the window of her friend's car, threatening to shoot each of them.

Muskegon police officers later found the defendant's car parked around the corner from where the assault had taken place. There was human blood on the door frame of the car, and the car contained a bloody paper towel, a pair of binoculars, and three rounds of .38 caliber

ammunition.

Subsequent investigation led the officers to the home of the defendant. The home was eventually searched, pursuant to a search warrant. During the search, the officers found a red tin container in the upstairs hallway that contained ammunition of various caliber. The officers also found, in the attic of the residence, a loaded .38 caliber Smith & Wesson, Model 38 Airweight, five-shot revolver, ammunition, and two knives. The revolver was wrapped in a diaper inside a plastic bag. Blood was found on two of the bullets inside the chamber of the revolver. This blood was analyzed for DNA, with a positive match to the defendant.

The defendant had previously incurred a number of felony convictions, including the following: (1) Armed Robbery and Possession of a Firearm While in Commission of a Felony, for which he pled guilty on November 16, 1981, and for which he received consecutive sentences of eight to twenty years' imprisonment and two years' imprisonment, respectively (Fourteenth Circuit Court, Muskegon County); (2) Receiving and Concealing Stolen Property and Habitual Offender-Second, for which he pled guilty on April 30, 1990, and for which he received a sentence of one to seven years' imprisonment (Sixth Circuit Court, Oakland County); and (3) Armed Robbery and Felony Firearm, for which he pled *nolo contendere* on April 7, 1992, and for which he received consecutive sentences of three to 25 years' imprisonment and two years' imprisonment, respectively (Fourteenth Circuit Court, Muskegon County). He had been released from prison on July 1, 2004, approximately three months before committing the assault and possessing the handgun and ammunition.

The investigation was a coordinated effort of the Muskegon Police Department, the

Michigan State Police, and the bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

The case was prosecuted under the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, which is designed to reduce violent crime by targeting violent felons for federal prosecution for firearms violations, which carry stiff penalties.

Atkinson has been held in custody since being charged with these offenses, and he was remanded to the custody of the United States Marshal to await sentencing. Sentencing is scheduled for October 2, 2007, at 8:30 a.m..

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Phillip J. Green and Ryan D. Cobb.

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