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October 15, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**ROOSEVELT SPANN PLEADS GUILTY TO USE OF A FIREARM
IN A DRUG RELATED MURDER**

Baltimore, Maryland - Roosevelt Spann, also known as Russell Rice, Jr. and Peachy, age 40, of Baltimore, pleaded guilty today to use of a firearm in a drug trafficking crime resulting in death, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

According to the statement of facts presented to the court as part of the guilty plea, from at least 1996 through December 2001, Jermaine Bell was the leader of a narcotics trafficking organization known as "R-N-G" which distributed heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine at multiple street-level shops in the vicinity of Reisterstown Road and Gwynn Falls Parkway in Baltimore City. The heroin was sold under a number of brand names, including "Brick City" and "Black and White." During a dispute over drug territory, Bell issued contracts for the murder of the leader of a rival drug organization and his associates, including a \$10,000 contract for the murder of Torrence Johnson.

In response to the contract, on November 8, 2001, Spann and others, including Solothal "Itchy Man" Thomas and James Moore, went to an area on North Charles Street, where they knew Johnson worked, in an attempt to locate and kill Johnson. Thomas gave a handgun to Moore and directed him to shoot Johnson. Spann was to be the getaway driver, using a stolen motorcycle he had parked nearby. Moore shot and killed Johnson as he walked down Charles Street toward a bus stop. Spann and Moore attempted to leave the scene on the motorcycle, but could not get it started, so they ran back to Spann's house, where they met Thomas and the others.

Spann faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. U.S. District Judge Richard D. Bennett scheduled sentencing for January 16, 2009 at 11:30 a.m. James Moore, age 32, of Baltimore, previously pleaded guilty to his role in the murder and faces a maximum sentence of life in prison at his sentencing, which has not yet been scheduled.

Jermaine Bell, age 33, of Baltimore, pleaded guilty to the same charge in relation to the murder of Angelo Stringfellow on June 26, 2001. Bell faces a maximum sentence of life in prison at his sentencing on November 21, 2008. Thomas, age 32, also of Baltimore, was convicted on July 6, 2006, on five counts relating to his participation in another 2001 murder-for-hire and is serving life in prison.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy and the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office - Homicide Division, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Baltimore Police Department for their assistance in the investigation and prosecution. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jason Weinstein, Tonya Kelly Kowitz and Gregory Welsh, who are prosecuting the case.