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BALTIMORE FELON IN POSSESSION SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS

BALTIMORE, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein announces that today U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. sentenced Rodney Saunders, age 26, of Baltimore, Maryland to 10 years in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release in connection with his conviction by a federal jury on August 3, 2005 of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

According to evidence presented at trial, on December 8, 2003 Saunders and two co-conspirators entered the Club Paradise liquor store at the corner of Carey and Laurens streets in Baltimore. The cashier testified that the three conspirators brandished handguns and robbed the customers. The robbers fled the store in a blue minivan. The cashier called 911 and police officers quickly responded to the scene. An officer spotted the getaway car a few minutes after the robbery and stopped the car. As Saunders jumped out of the car, an officer observed a handgun drop to the ground from the area where Saunders had been seated. Saunders took several steps into a field, tossed an object into the field and fled on foot. During the ensuing chase, Saunders removed and threw a hipster jacket onto the ground moments before he was arrested. Officers returned to where the minivan was stopped and found that it was gone. On the ground where the van was parked they found two loaded handguns - a silver Smith & Wesson 9mm handgun and a Bryco 9mm handgun. They also found a loaded Tanfoglio .380 caliber semi-automatic pistol at the location where Saunders had tossed the object as he fled on foot. Saunders had previously been convicted of a crime punishable by more than one year in prison.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Baltimore City Police Department for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorneys Paul Tiao and Jonathan Mastrangelo, who prosecuted the case.