



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland*

*Rod J. Rosenstein
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer*

*36 South Charles Street
Fourth Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201*

*410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

**October 31, 2006
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/md>**

**Contact AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or
MARCIA MURPHY at 410-209-4885**

**HYATTSVILLE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO
DRUG AND GUN CHARGES AS TRIAL BEGINS**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Raymond Allen Watts, age 25, of Hyattsville, Maryland, pleaded guilty today to conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Watts pleaded guilty just prior to the beginning of his trial.

In a statement of facts provided to the court as part of the plea agreement, on June 10, 2005 Watts and a companion drove to two service stations in the 6600 block of Riverdale Road, Riverdale, Maryland. Watts sold powder and crack cocaine at the gas stations to numerous individuals who approached his vehicle. Officers who observed the activities attempted to stop the vehicle as it left the second gas station. Watts drove into an apartment complex and as the vehicle stopped, he gave his companion several items including a loaded Smith and Wesson .40 caliber semi-automatic handgun, a plastic bag containing 426.7 grams of cocaine base, 367.6 grams of cocaine powder, an electronic scale, and approximately \$16,327. His companion grabbed the items and fled into an apartment building where he was arrested and officers recovered the items. Watts was prohibited from possessing a firearm based on a previous felony conviction.

Watts faces a mandatory minimum of 10 years and maximum sentence of life in prison for conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine and a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm. U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte has scheduled sentencing for December 29, 2006. The defendant remains in the custody of the United States Marshal Service pending his sentencing.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the investigative work performed by the Prince Georges County Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Mr. Rosenstein also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Deborah Johnston and Michele Sartori, who are prosecuting the case.