

United States Department of Justice

For Immediate Release

August 2, 2010 **United States Attorney's Office**
Eastern District of Louisiana

Ten-Count Federal Indictment for Carjacking - Murder, Witness Tampering Resulting in Murder, and Gun Violations Unsealed

A ten-count indictment returned on July 9, 2010 against STEVEN EARL HARDRICK, age 25, of New Orleans, Louisiana, was unsealed this morning, announced U.S. Attorney Jim Letten.

The indictment charges HARDRICK with Carjacking - Murder (Count 1); Murder of a Potential Witness to a Federal Offense (Count 2); Felon in Possession of a Firearm (Counts 3 and 4); Possession of a Stolen Firearm (Count 5); Discharge of a Firearm During and In Relation to a Carjacking and Witness Murder (Counts 6 and 7); Death of a Person through the Use of a Firearm During a Carjacking (Counts 8 and 9); and Death of a Person through the Use of a Firearm During and in Relation to Witness Murder (Count 10).

According to the indictment, on October 24, 2007, HARDRICK murdered Brett Jacobs, David Alford and Howard Pickens following a carjacking. HARDRICK is also charged with murdering Howard Lee Pickens to prevent Pickens from reporting the murders to law enforcement authorities. In addition, the indictment includes eight counts of various violations of the Federal Gun Control Act. Since the indictment also alleges special findings against the defendant, if convicted, HARDRICK faces maximum penalties of life in prison or the death penalty.

Speaking to today's developments, U.S. Attorney Letten stated: "As I stand here today with our federal, state, and local partners who have worked seamlessly together to secure today's murder indictment, it is important that the public knows that we will continue to relentlessly pursue individuals who take lives and endanger citizens through violent means—and especially the illegal use of firearms. Along with our prosecution team, I want to thank the men and women of the FBI, the New Orleans Police Department, the Louisiana State Police, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office and other members of the Task Force. Special gratitude goes to New Orleans District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro and his team, whose cooperation helped make these federal charges possible."

David Welker, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, added: "This case is the perfect example of law enforcement partners working together to bring their specific expertise, exceptional work ethic and desire to pursue the most dangerous criminals impacting the region."

U.S. Attorney Jim Letten reiterated that the indictment is merely a charge and that the guilt of the defendant must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau Investigation Violent Crime Task Force with the assistance of the New Orleans Police Department, the Louisiana State Police, and the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office. The Violent Crime Task Force is led by FBI and includes a

team of dedicated investigators from the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, New Orleans Police Department, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, the Louisiana State Police, St. Bernard Sheriff's Office and Kenner Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Duane A. Evans and Elizabeth Privitera.