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**ROCKFORD MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN FOILED PLAN
TO SET OFF GRENADES IN ROCKFORD SHOPPING MALL**

CHICAGO – A Rockford, Il., man, admitted today in Federal Court that he planned to set off several grenades in garbage cans at a shopping mall in Rockford last December. The defendant, **Derrick Shareef**, 23, pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction. Shareef was arrested on Dec. 6, 2006, by agents of the FBI-led Chicago Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) when he met with an undercover agent at a store parking lot in Rockford to trade a set of stereo speakers for four hand grenades and a hand gun. He has remained in federal custody since he was arrested. Shareef was scheduled to stand trial beginning December 10, 2007.

Shareef entered his guilty plea before U.S. District Judge David Coar, who set sentencing for March 14, 2008. Shareef faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. While there is no plea agreement, the Government anticipates that a remaining count of attempted arson will be dismissed at sentencing.

Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, said they were pleased with the conviction. At the time of Shareef's arrest, they noted that there was no

imminent risk of harm once the threat allegedly posed by Shareef was detected by the Joint Terrorism Task Force, and the charges alleged that he was acting alone.

The indictment against Shareef alleged that he planned to set off several grenades at the CherryVale Shopping Mall, near the junction of Interstate 90 and Interstate 39 on the east side of Rockford, about 90 miles northwest of Chicago. The mall, which has approximately 130 retail stores, is owned by CBL & Associates Properties, Inc., based in Chattanooga, Tenn. The mall was among several potential targets that Shareef allegedly discussed during the course of the investigation – the others were primarily local government facilities. At all times Shareef allegedly was acting on his plan between Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 2006, Shareef was in contact with an acquaintance, who unbeknownst to him was cooperating with the FBI, and an undercover agent who was posing as the cooperating individual's friend.

The Chicago FBI's JTTF is comprised of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies from throughout the Northern District of Illinois, all of whom contributed to the investigation.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sergio Acosta and Carrie Hamilton.

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