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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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March 28, 2006

Ald. Robert G. Donovan  
Ald. Terry L. Witkowski  
Ald. Tony Zielinski  
(414) 286-2221

## Graffiti Vandal Could Get "Tagged" By Property Owners, Courts

*Council Members Will Hold News Conference to Publicize Prolific Tagger, Urge  
Property Owners and Tenants to Fight Back by Pursuing Court Cases for Damages*

A Wauwatosa man facing an April court date for what authorities say is likely a mere fraction of the graffiti he's responsible for throughout the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County could get more than he bargained for if three Common Council members have their say.

The three Council members who serve on the city's Anti-Graffiti Task Force – Ald. Robert G. Donovan, Ald. Terry L. Witkowski and Ald. Tony Zielinski – have scheduled a news conference tomorrow to call attention to case of Troy Mosby, 20, of Wauwatosa, who is scheduled to go to court on April 7 on five counts of graffiti – a misdemeanor. **The news conference will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 29, 2006, and will be held in the alley between S. 22<sup>nd</sup> and S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets just south of W. National Ave. (2239 W. National Ave.). Police officials and representatives of neighborhood groups and community-based organizations are also expected to participate. Media coverage is invited.**

Hoping to draw on the reserve of public disgust and anger generated by graffiti, the three aldermen are encouraging property owners, business people and tenants who think their homes, businesses, buildings or other surfaces have been defaced by Mosby to file claims that can be used against Mosby, whose trademark tag was the word "Syrup."

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## **Graffiti Vandal Under Fire/ADD ONE**

“Here we have a man who lives in Wauwatosa who we believe has defaced hundreds of properties throughout the City of Milwaukee and in the suburbs, and yet he’s facing only five counts of graffiti,” said Ald. Donovan. “That is just not acceptable – we need to send a strong message that we’re not going to tolerate this defacing of our neighborhoods.”

“It’s time for the victims to fight back and to seek justice, and we believe that people can do that by filing small claims actions against (Mosby),” Ald. Donovan said.

Ald. Zielinski said a second court-centered approach at increasing penalties against Mosby is being handled by Assistant City Attorney Vincent Bobot, the City Attorney’s Office point person on neighborhood nuisance cases. “Vince is putting together documentation and information related to (Mosby’s) graffiti that is located on city property, including light poles and playground surfaces,” said Ald. Zielinski.

“The thought is that the city can file civil actions against (Mosby) for defacing or damaging city property,” Ald. Zielinski said.

Thirdly, the aldermen are urging residents and businesses that discover the “Syrup” tag to contact police immediately. “The idea is to add these new tags to the inventory and make sure he’s held accountable for all that he’s done,” said Ald. Witkowski, who’s also strongly urging graffiti victims to use small claims court to recover costs for cleanup and removal.

Ald. Donovan said another new tactic being suggested by the graffiti task force is encouraging residents and business owners to attend court hearings for taggers and give victim impact testimony. “We’re also encouraging people to contact the judges in these cases and let them know you’re interested in seeing punishment and restitution,” he said.

Authorities say Mosby is likely responsible for hundreds of graffiti “tags” in Milwaukee and Milwaukee County. Arrested first by Milwaukee police in April 2005 on 32 counts of graffiti, Mosby’s “Syrup” tags have been found in areas near N. 9<sup>th</sup> and W. Center Streets, along W. North Ave., along N. 124<sup>th</sup> St. in Wauwatosa and on Milwaukee’s south side. Mosby was a frequent rider of Milwaukee County Transit System buses and would “ride and tag” (getting off the bus at various points to tag – and then getting back on to go to a new tagging destination) along several different MCTS bus routes.

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## **Graffiti Vandal Under Fire/ADD TWO**

“This guy covered a lot of ground – north side, south side, west side – so his tags are literally all over the place,” said Ald. Zielinski.

After Mosby’s arrest, police noticed that Mosby’s tags kept popping up and new ones were appearing on a weekly basis. While in court for his original arrest, police nabbed Mosby for scrawling his tag inside an elevator at the Milwaukee County Safety Building. Soon after that, authorities began tracking Mosby’s tags and a coordinated effort by police led to an “inventory” of all his known tags in the city and in Milwaukee County. When confronted by police with the new inventory, Mosby admitted to 136 counts of graffiti.

However, the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office has charged Mosby with only five counts in Milwaukee County Circuit Court. His case is scheduled to go to trial on April 7.

Residents are reminded that they can call the 24-hour WeTip hotline – 1-800-78-CRIME – and report graffiti anonymously. Callers to the hotline may be eligible for a reward up to \$1,000.

Additional anti-graffiti tactics will be detailed at Monday’s news conference.

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