



PRESS RELEASE

**Attorney General Frosh Announces Indictments of 26 Individuals
for Gang Activity in Maryland Correctional Facilities**
*Defendants Include Two State Correctional Officers;
Charges Include Attempted First-Degree Murder, Gang Participation and
Smuggling of Contraband into Prison Facilities*

BALTIMORE, MD (November 30, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced the indictments of 26 defendants after a nearly year-long, multi-agency investigation of gang activity in Maryland correctional facilities. Charges in the indictments include attempted first-degree murder, gang participation, drug distribution, smuggling of contraband into prison facilities, and misconduct in office. The investigation was led by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS).

The initial target of the investigation was Correctional Officer Sergeant Antoine Fordham. Fordham is a high-ranking member of the 8-Trey Crips street gang. The 8-Trey Crips is a Crips set that operates inside Baltimore City and in several Maryland counties both inside Maryland correctional facilities and on the street. In his position, Fordham oversaw much of the 8-Trey Crips' drug dealing and other illicit activities near the intersections of Frankford Avenue and Sinclair Lane in Baltimore City. Fordham and other members of the gang authorized and/or committed acts of violence including shootings and assaults to protect the gang's turf and to maintain discipline within the gang.

The investigation grew to include additional gang members and other co-conspirators who together were running a large-scale, contraband-delivery operation in several Maryland correctional facilities, including Jessup Correctional Institution and Maryland Correctional Institution – Jessup, as well as other facilities. Incarcerated members of the gang used contraband cellular phones and Maryland's prison phone system to arrange times and locations for outside facilitators, who acquired the contraband items, to meet and exchange payment and the contraband to the other co-conspirators who would actually bring the items into the correctional facilities. Two of the indicted co-conspirators who brought the items into the facility are Fordham and another correctional officer, Phillippe Jordan. Ten of the other indicted co-conspirators are outside facilitators and include the mothers of three of the inmates. While some payments for the contraband were made in cash, the majority of payments were made using PayPal.

“Gangs are a blight on any community in which they operate,” said Attorney General Frosh. “As members of the 8-Trey Crips gang, Fordham and Jordan betrayed their positions of trust by organizing and assisting the import of violence, drugs, and other contraband into the prison system where order is paramount to keeping inmates and staff safe.”

The gang perpetrated violence inside the jails as well. During the course of the investigation, Crips leaders, including Fordham, ordered an attack on an incarcerated former Crips member because he was discovered to be homosexual, a violation of the gang’s code. The victim was stabbed more than 30 times, but survived. In addition, two other co-conspirators were involved in a physical altercation with correctional officers who were trying to seize contraband, including drugs, that investigators learned had been delivered to the inmates the day before as part of the contraband-delivery operation.

“When elected, Governor Larry Hogan pledged to expose misconduct and corruption in the state correctional system,” said DPSCS Secretary Stephen T. Moyer. “Today is another down payment on that pledge sending a clear message to anyone who engages in criminal behavior that we will find you, arrest you and prosecute you to the fullest extent of the law.”

“This case, through the investigation and subsequent indictments, search warrants, and arrests, shows that the DEA is dedicated to not only investigating and dismantling large scale drug trafficking organizations, but also cases where the distribution includes inmates and correctional officers,” said Don Hibbert, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration Baltimore District Office. “DEA, with our federal, state and local partners, will continue to go wherever the case takes us, whether that be overseas, in the streets of Baltimore, or even in the prison system.”

Penalties faced by members of the conspiracy range from three years to life imprisonment.

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked Organized Crime Chief Katie Dorian, Assistant Attorneys General Dennis Clark and Zachary Norfolk, and former Assistant Attorney General Melissa Hoppmeyer. Attorney General Frosh also thanked the many law enforcement agencies and prosecuting agencies who assisted in the investigation, including the Drug Enforcement Administration Baltimore District Office, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Baltimore City Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Anne Arundel County Sheriff’s Office, the Baltimore City Sheriff’s Office, the Maryland State Police, the United States Marshals Service, the Anne Arundel County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Baltimore County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office, and the Office of the State Prosecutor.

A criminal indictment is merely an accusation of wrongdoing, and a defendant is presumed innocent until the State proves the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.