



BRIAN E. FROSH, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh Announces Gang Leader and Associate Plead Guilty to Drug Distribution and Sex Trafficking

BALTIMORE, MD (October 5, 2021) - Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that gang leader David Tico Brown, 45, and his close associate Michael Anthony Copeland, 42, pleaded guilty to multiple offenses for their role in the “Brown Drug Trafficking Organization.” The gang engaged in the distribution of numerous controlled dangerous substances, including cocaine, fentanyl, methamphetamine and marijuana in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County and Baltimore City. The leaders of the gang also engaged in sex trafficking of numerous women. The investigation was led by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General and the Anne Arundel County Police Department.

Brown pleaded guilty to the charges of gang leader, volume dealer, conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking and possession with intent to distribute cocaine. He was sentenced to 40 years in prison with all but 28 years suspended, the first 5 years of which are to be served without the possibility of parole. Copeland pleaded guilty to participating in a criminal gang, volume dealer, conspiracy to engage in sex trafficking and possession with intent to distribute cocaine. He was sentenced to 40 years in prison with all but 24 years suspended, the first 5 of which are to be served without the possibility of parole.

The investigation began in 2019 when Anne Arundel County police detectives learned of a large organization selling controlled dangerous substances out of a local hotel. The leader of the organization, David Brown, used hotel staff and his co-defendants to thwart efforts of law enforcement while keeping members of his organization stocked with illegal narcotics. Brown’s co-conspirators kept him so well insulated that he rarely left the hotel. Copeland often met with drug suppliers off-site and returned to the hotel to cook, package, and distribute the controlled substances. Other members of the organization traveled throughout Maryland and to other states to obtain the illegal narcotics that were later sold by the organization. Some members of the organization furthered the efforts of the gang by forcing women to engage in sex trafficking and encouraging those victims to provide CDS to their “dates.”

For approximately eight months, Anne Arundel County detectives conducted surveillance of members of the gang and the activities occurring at the hotel and surrounding areas. During the course of the investigation, detectives observed members obtaining and distributing the controlled dangerous substances, made purchases from members of the organization, and observed hand-to-hand drug transactions. Detectives learned how David Brown, Michael

Copeland and other members of the organization forced women to engage in sex trafficking in exchange for rooms at the hotel, money and illegal narcotics.

Upon the arrests of David Brown, Michael Copeland and other indicted members of the organization, detectives located and seized 2 assault rifles and 7 handguns, as well as 502 grams of crack cocaine, 119 grams of powder cocaine, over 3000 grams of marijuana, over 200 grams of heroin/fentanyl, 38 grams of MDMA, 1,316 grams of methamphetamine, and 13 strips of suboxone in addition to \$27,000 in cash.

“Brown and Copeland organized and led the distribution of large amounts of illegal and deadly drugs,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Their illegal activities stretched across multiple counties. In addition to the drug distribution, they trafficked women to further the efforts of the organization. As a result of the efforts of multiple law enforcement agencies, we shut this drug and human trafficking organization down.”

“This investigation was a collaborative effort with our Federal, State and local partners, and I am grateful for the outstanding work of our detectives who assisted in breaking up this drug distribution and sex trafficking organization,” said Anne Arundel County Police Chief Amal E. Awad. “These types of investigations take a significant amount of time, and our community is safer as a result of the work conducted in this case.”

“The successful investigation and prosecution of this multi-jurisdiction case shows our commitment to disrupting criminal enterprises that peddle drugs and exploit women,” said State’s Attorney Anne Colt Leitess. “I would like to thank Assistant State’s Attorney Jennifer Doud, who served as a Special Assistant Attorney General, for her work in this case, Attorney General Brian Frosh and the Office of the Attorney General who, along with the Anne Arundel County Police Department, led this successful large-scale operation.”

This investigation was a part of the Maryland Criminal Investigation Network (MCIN) Initiative under the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services.

“Governor Larry Hogan launched the Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network to take back our streets and disrupt violent gangs like the Brown Drug Trafficking organization,” said Glenn Fueston, executive director of the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. “Our dedicated law enforcement partners are doing exceptional work to deter these dangerous criminals, stop illegal drug flow into our state, and take illegal weapons off of our streets for a safer Maryland.”

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked Organized Crime Chief Katie Dorian, the Anne Arundel County Police Department’s Narcotics & Special Investigations Section, Anne Arundel County State’s Attorney Anne Colt Leitess, Special Assistant Attorney General Jennifer Doud and former Assistant Attorney General Kelly A. Hooper-McCamey who are prosecuting the case.

Attorney General Frosh also thanked numerous other law enforcement and victim assistance agencies for their assistance in this case: Baltimore County Police Department, Baltimore Police Department, Howard County Police Department, Maryland State Police, DEA Baltimore, Homeland Security Investigations, and Turn Around, Inc.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/100521a.pdf>