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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General's Office and Baltimore Police Take Down and Indict Violent Criminal Organization Distributing Drugs and Perpetrating Violence

Attorney General Charges 33 Individuals in Conspiracy to Distribute Heroin, Fentanyl, and Cocaine in Baltimore City.

BALTIMORE, MD (March 28, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the indictments of 33 defendants for multiple charges, including participation in a criminal organization, conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances, attempted first-degree murder, and firearm-related counts.

The investigation into the criminal organization by the Baltimore City Police Department's Group Violence Unit and the Attorney General's Office's Organized Crime Unit began as a result of an uptick of violence in 2021 in the South, Southwestern, and Western area of Baltimore City—including the Shipley Hill, Booth-Boyd, and Fayette Street neighborhoods. The 16-month long investigation, which used a multitude of investigative techniques to include undercover detective buys, video surveillance and wiretaps revealed that the criminal organization utilized drug sales, firearms, violence, and threats of violence to control and dominate their territory and make money.

The organization comprised a complex hierarchy of suppliers, managers, street lieutenants, and low-level street dealers amongst others who operated primarily in the areas of West Baltimore Street and North Bentalou Street, South Calverton Road and Frederick Avenue, and South Franklinton Road and Hollins Street and engaged in the daily distribution of illegal drugs, mainly heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine. In addition to these locations' members and associates of the organization utilized vehicles to distribute drugs to customers within Maryland, delivering to their businesses, homes, the homes of family members, or specific stash locations. Members and associates of the organization possessed and utilized firearms to protect the organization and its criminal activities and proceeds. In an effort to avoid arrest and detection by police, the organization utilized the homes of members, associates, and family members, to stash, store, and safeguard illegal drugs, weapons, and proceeds, and as a place to retreat if police entered the territory.

On May 7, 2022, two members of the organization—James Brunson and Ernest Hudson—committed an attempted murder near the organization’s territory of West Baltimore and North Bentalou Streets. Brunson and Hudson were involved in a dispute with other individuals and are captured on video surveillance going to their respective vehicles, retrieving their handguns, and proceeding to approach and shoot at the other individuals. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Additionally, Keith Miller, a high-ranking member of the organization purposefully shot at another member on December 19, 2022, near South Calverton Road and Frederick Avenue in an attempt to murder him due to an internal dispute. The victim was not injured, and this shooting was also captured on video surveillance.

The investigation also revealed that one of the members of the organization, Terrell Cash, was engaging in human trafficking in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. In addition to his charges with the rest of the organization, Cash was also indicted on two counts of human trafficking.

During the investigation detectives conducted undercover drug purchases from the organization. On multiple occasions, the purchased drug chemically tested positive for a different drug, to include fentanyl, a fentanyl analogue, or mixture of fentanyl and cocaine. Fentanyl laced drugs are extremely dangerous, and often like these controlled purchases, buyers are unaware that the drugs they purchased are laced. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are the most common drugs involved in overdose deaths. Across the U.S., over 150 people die every day from overdoses related to synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

A total of nine firearms and one rifle were recovered during the investigation, along with ammunition, a large quantity of fentanyl and cocaine, and around \$30,000 in U.S. currency.

“Every resident of Maryland deserves a safe community and the ability to live free of violence and the fear of violence. Today’s announcement reflects a strong collective commitment to removing individuals and criminal organizations that seek to flood communities with guns and drugs, commit acts of violence, and put lives at risk—a top priority for me and my office, and our partners in law enforcement,” said Attorney General Brown.

“These arrests represent the latest in a series of operations that illustrates our commitment to disrupting open-air drug markets,” said Commissioner Michael Harrison. “As our city and state continues to grapple with overdose deaths and addiction, we must dismantle these organizations that destroy our neighborhoods and damage our quality of life through drug distribution.”

"Today’s takedown provides evidence that we must continue to do the deep work in our communities to ensure that those who choose violence and criminal activity over peace must suffer the consequences," said Mayor Brandon Scott. "Through our GVRS program, we have seen firsthand the power of collaboration across all partners - including BPD, MONSE, state and federal authorities, and community organizations - when we pull our resources together for a common cause."

"GVRS seeks to give individuals most at-risk for violence or victimization the opportunity to receive support and transform their lives for the better. However, for those who decide to continue to pose a risk to other villagers, like the 33 individuals included in this indictment, we do not and will not hesitate to implement swift, certain, and legitimate consequences," said Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement Executive Director Shantay Jackson.

"These actions, coupled with services offered by our partners at Youth Advocate Programs and Roca, are what makes this strategy effective at deterring violence and contributing to a safer, healthier Baltimore."

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked the Baltimore City Police Department detectives who worked countless hours on this investigation. Attorney General Brown also thanked Criminal Division Chief Katie Dorian and Assistant Attorneys General Shannon Price and Krystle Sanders, who are prosecuting the case. Attorney General Brown thanks State's Attorney for Baltimore City Ivan Bates, and all of our law enforcement partners who helped provide assistance and resources during this investigation, including the ATF, DEA, FBI, U.S. Marshals, Maryland State Police, Anne Arundel County Police Department, Baltimore County Police Department, Harford County Police Department, Howard County Police Department, and the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office.

Attorney General Brown also thanked Governor Wes Moore for assistance and funding through the Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (MCIN), as well as Baltimore City Mayor Brandon Scott's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement for the coordination under the Group Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRs).

Individuals Indicted

*Antonio Ben, 34, Baltimore
Darrick Brown, 54, Parkville
James Brunson, 39, Baltimore
Terrell Cash, 41, Baltimore County
*Alicia Evans, 34, Baltimore
*Tramaine Evans, 21, Baltimore
*Jeshaiah Gibson, 26, Baltimore
Donald Goodman, 44, Baltimore County
*Javon Groomes, 28, Taneytown
*Keith Hardy, 27, Windsor Mill
Keith Harrison, 30, Baltimore
Damon Hite, 45, Windsor Mill
Ernest Hudson, 36, Baltimore
Jashawn Jonson, 26, Baltimore
Antwan Jones, 22, Baltimore
Nicholas Jones, 31, Baltimore
Lamont Laws-Rosenboro, 28, Baltimore
*Tony McClamy, 36, Baltimore
*De'andre McCormick, 28, Baltimore
Keith Miller, 33, Reisterstown
Shytia Moody, 25, Baltimore
*Troy Moore, 33, Baltimore
Damon Patterson, 38, Baltimore
Malik Richardson, 28, Lansdowne
James Sanders, 38, Baltimore County
Clifford Sellman, 52, Baltimore
*Corey Smith-Rosenboro, 31, Baltimore
Andra Smother, 41, Middle River
*Tyrone Stuckey, 36, Baltimore
*Earl Tate, 40, Baltimore
*Kirk Taylor, 43, Baltimore

Dex Williams, 42, Baltimore

*James Woodfolk, 25, Baltimore

Defendants with a red asterisk by their name have not yet been apprehended. We are asking those individuals to contact the Baltimore Police Department and arrange to turn themselves in. Anyone with information on the whereabouts of those individuals is asked to contact Baltimore Police or Metro Crime Stoppers at 1-866-756-2587 or visit www.metrocrimestoppers.org/submit-a-tip/. Callers can remain anonymous.

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. The defendants' cases will be prosecuted in Baltimore City.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/032823.pdf>