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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Brown Announces Indictments of Eleven People for Prison Contraband Conspiracy at Jessup Correctional Institution

*Charges Stem from Long-Term Investigation at State Prison in Anne Arundel
County*

BALTIMORE, MD (April 12, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced that eleven people were indicted for a prison contraband conspiracy operating at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) in Jessup, Anne Arundel County, Maryland. The investigation was led by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General’s Organized Crime Unit, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), and the Anne Arundel County Police Department.

In April 2021, the DPSCS Intelligence and Investigative Division began an investigation after discovering heroin, suboxone, an Apple Watch, and data storage cards in the JCI cell of inmates Gary Ward and Donte Tyner. Working with the Attorney General’s Office and the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the investigative team uncovered a complex contraband conspiracy operating to smuggle drugs and other contraband into JCI.

As alleged in the indictments, the investigation identified Makeia Brockington Nelson, a nurse contractor who worked in JCI’s medical unit as the person smuggling the drugs and other contraband into JCI. On March 30, 2022, law enforcement intercepted a package of contraband that Nelson intended to smuggle into JCI, which included suboxone, marijuana, tobacco, and SIM cards. The investigation revealed that Nelson had received that package from Jasmine Ward, the daughter of JCI inmate Gary Ward. A search warrant of Nelson’s house uncovered additional suboxone and tobacco she intended to smuggle into JCI, at which time Nelson was barred from all DPSCS facilities. After the interception of the package, financial records from Cash App identified the involvement of a network of outside facilitators who sent and received money to pay for the drugs and contraband and Nelson’s smuggling fee. The records showed that from January 2021 through March 2022, Nelson received at least \$92,253 in smuggling fees from the outside facilitators on behalf of current and former JCI inmates.

The indictments in the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County include:

Makeia Nelson, who also goes by Makeia Brown and Makeia Brockington, 48, of Hunt Valley, the former nurse contractor, is charged in a 26-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances, possession of controlled dangerous substances with the intent to distribute, and possession of contraband with the intent to deliver it to a person confined or detained in a place of confinement.

Tamar Brown, 24, of Hunt Valley, the daughter of Makeia Nelson, is charged in a 19-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances, and possession of controlled dangerous substances with the intent to distribute.

Gary Ward, Jr., 52, a JCI inmate, is charged in a 9-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances, and possession with intent to distribute heroin.

Donte Tyner, 36, a JCI inmate, is charged in a 9-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances, and possession with intent to distribute heroin.

Rodney Brown, 54, a JCI inmate, is charged in a 6-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and solicitation of the distribution of controlled dangerous substances.

Jasmine Ward, 30, of Baltimore, the daughter of Gary Ward, is charged in a 4-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances.

Vaughn Clanton, 48, of Middle River, the former cellmate of Gary Ward, is charged in a 4-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances.

Marlon Clanton, 39, of Parkville, the brother of Vaughn Clanton, is charged in a 4-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled dangerous substances.

Kyvelle Martin, 39, a former JCI inmate, is charged in a 9-count indictment, including charges of possession of a telecommunication device in a place of confinement and possession of a controlled dangerous substance in a place of confinement.

Tavon Owens, 29, a former JCI inmate, is charged in a 6-count indictment, including charges of possession with intent to distribute Suboxone and possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement.

Leo Gonzalez, 28, a former JCI inmate, is charged in a 3-count indictment for possession of contraband.

“The illegal flow of drugs and other contraband into prisons leads to violence and drug overdoses within our prisons and creates barriers to our treatment, education, and rehabilitation

efforts,” said Attorney General Brown. "Let me be clear, to those who think they can operate in the shadows, we have zero tolerance for this sort of criminal behavior. We are an enthusiastic partner with DPSCS in obliterating the smuggling of contraband into any of the State’s correctional facilities."

“Introducing contraband into our facilities poses great danger for our employees and the incarcerated,” says Carolyn J. Scruggs, Secretary of DPSCS. “This case began thanks to excellent work by our DPSCS officers and detectives. Our law enforcement and prosecuting partners worked hard bringing the case to closure.”

“I am grateful for Detective Patterson who worked tirelessly on this year-long investigation that resulted in the dismantling of this drug smuggling and contraband operation,” said Anne Arundel County Chief of Police Amal E. Awad. “This successful outcome is a direct result of our partnership with the Maryland Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.”

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked Criminal Division Chief Katie Dorian, DPSCS Detective Sergeant Michael Baier, Anne Arundel County Police Department Detective Erick Patterson, as well as Senior Assistant Attorneys General Jared I. Albert and Zachary A. Norfolk, who are prosecuting this case.

Attorney General Brown also thanked State’s Attorney for Anne Arundel County Anne Colt Leitess for her assistance in this investigation.

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.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/041223.pdf>