



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contacts:  
[press@oag.state.md.us](mailto:press@oag.state.md.us)  
410-576-7009

## **Attorney General Brown Announces Seizure of 37 Firearms and more than 8 Kilograms of Fentanyl Destined for the Streets of Maryland**

*Four Individuals Charged with Participation in a Criminal Organization for Roles in Conspiracy to Distribute Large Amounts of Fentanyl and Cocaine*

**BALTIMORE, MD (October 2, 2023)** – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the indictments of four individuals for their roles in a criminal enterprise responsible for trafficking large amounts of fentanyl and cocaine. The investigation resulted in the seizure of 37 firearms, including three assault weapons, three handguns equipped with Glock switch attachments (allowing them to operate as fully automatic weapons), over 1,000 rounds of ammunition, and body armor. Detectives also seized over 8.5 kilograms of fentanyl, 3 kilograms of cocaine, kilogram presses, drug ledgers, and over \$308,000 of narcotic proceeds. The investigation was led by the Attorney General’s Organized Crime Unit and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) through the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program—Group 51.

Ronald Rawles, 35, of Baltimore City, and Corey Frazier, 37, of Howard County, who acted as large-scale distributors of narcotics for the drug trafficking organization, have each been charged with conspiracy, participation in a criminal organization, volume dealer, distribution of fentanyl, possession of fentanyl with the intent to distribute, possession of cocaine with the intent to distribute, use of firearms in a drug trafficking crime, illegal possession of regulated firearms, and related charges.

Two additional defendants, who have not yet been apprehended, who received large quantities of narcotics from Rawles and Frazier and then repackaged them for street-level distribution, have been charged with conspiracy, participation in a criminal organization, volume dealer, possession of fentanyl with the intent to distribute, use of firearms in a drug trafficking crime, illegal possession of regulated firearms, and related charges.

As alleged in the indictment, the investigation revealed that at least as early as August 2022 through July 2023, Ronald Rawles and Corey Frazier maintained multiple stash locations for fentanyl, cocaine, and firearms in luxury apartment buildings in Baltimore City and Howard

County. Rawles and Frazier would supply mid-level narcotic dealers with bulk quantities of drugs, which they would then break down and package for further redistribution. Frazier and Rawles also supplied narcotics to street-level shops, one of which operated at the intersection of Cranston Avenue and North Woodington Road in Baltimore City.

As a result of the ongoing narcotics trafficking, federal agents and task force officers executed search and seizure warrants for multiple stash locations, residences, and vehicles used by the criminal enterprise. Search warrants were executed in Howard County, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City. From one stash location on East Fort Avenue in Baltimore City, detectives recovered eight guns and approximately four kilograms of fentanyl, as well as a variety of narcotic-manufacturing paraphernalia. From another stash location on East Saratoga Street in Baltimore City, detectives recovered approximately three-and-one-half kilograms of fentanyl and approximately three kilograms of cocaine, as well as a variety of narcotic-manufacturing paraphernalia and narcotic proceeds. From Frazier's residence and vehicle in Howard County, detectives recovered approximately 7.4 grams of fentanyl, a firearm, and approximately \$39,000 in narcotic proceeds. From Rawles' residence and vehicle in Baltimore City, detectives recovered approximately \$63,000 in narcotic proceeds and a firearm. Upon detectives making entry to Rawles' residence, Rawles attempted to flee by climbing off his eighth-story balcony, which resulted in injuries that required hospitalization. Additional narcotics, firearms, and narcotic proceeds were recovered from the additional defendants' residences.

Members of DEA HIDTA Group 51 also executed a search and seizure warrant at a self-storage unit that was being used by the criminal enterprise and seized 25 firearms, including a machine gun, assault-style rifles, and privately manufactured firearms (commonly referred to as "ghost guns"). Inside the storage unit, investigators also recovered miscellaneous firearms magazines, including drum magazines, approximately 1,000 rounds of ammunition, body armor, and over \$107,000 in U.S. currency.

"As alleged in the indictments, these individuals not only possessed a cache of firearms, but transported large volumes of deadly narcotics into our community without any regard of the health and safety of others," said Attorney General Brown. "This joint agency investigation is the latest example of the dedicated work that my Organized Crime Unit is doing with our federal and local partners to dismantle the infiltration of illegally possessed guns in our community, and to stop the supply of deadly narcotics, making Maryland safer for all."

"DEA works tirelessly to safeguard the American public by carrying out investigations and operations to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations and prosecute criminals - like the ones indicted in this case - that pose a threat to our communities and put our citizens in danger," mentioned Jarod Forget, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Washington Division. "These criminal organizations profit by pushing dangerous and deadly drugs such as fentanyl into neighborhoods throughout Maryland, disregarding the value of human life. Considering that only 2mg of fentanyl is enough to kill a person - a very small quantity that can fit in the tip of a pencil - the amount of fentanyl seized during this operation could have potentially killed over four million citizens. Together, we are sending a resounding message to drug trafficking organizations, their leaders, and anyone facilitating their illegal activities that we will not tolerate such actions and will work tirelessly to bring them to justice."

"Where there are drugs, there are almost always guns, and that is a volatile combination," said ATF Baltimore Special Agent in Charge Toni M. Crosby. "Guns are used as tools by these drug trafficking organizations to threaten and inflict violence for retaliation, expanding territory, and more. Adding machine gun conversion devices and guns with no identifiable markings into the

equation means these defendants circumvented the law at every turn to acquire this arsenal of firearms. The risk this posed to the community is tremendous. ATF and our law enforcement partners will continue to work side by side toward a safer Baltimore by taking criminals and the guns they possess off the street.”

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked Criminal Division Chief Katie Dorian, Assistant Attorney General Megan Greene, Assistant Attorney General Paul Halliday, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Howard County Police Department, the Baltimore County Police Department, the Maryland Transportation Authority Police, the Annapolis Police Department, the Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Laurel Police Department, the Baltimore City Police Department, and the Queen Anne’s County Sheriff’s Office. Attorney General Brown also thanked Howard County State’s Attorney Richard Gibson, Baltimore City State’s Attorney Ivan Bates, and Baltimore County State’s Attorney Scott Shellenberger for their assistance in this investigation.

This investigation was a coordinated effort under the Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (MCIN).

The defendants’ cases will be prosecuted in Howard County.

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/2023/100223.pdf>