



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Attorney General Brown Announces Convictions of Two Members of the “39 Babies” Gang for Participation in a Criminal Organization

*One Defendant, Karon Johnson, pleaded guilty to his role in the commission of two murders as part of the pattern of violence perpetrated by the criminal organization over a span of several months from 2019 into 2020.*

**BALTIMORE, MD (February 28, 2024)** – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the guilty pleas and sentencing of Karon Johnson and Pierre Briggs, both of Baltimore and both 23 years old, on charges including participation in a criminal organization and associated firearms violations. Johnson also pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree murder. The charges relate to a long-term investigation into a criminal enterprise, operating in Baltimore City, that engaged in a pattern of violent acts, including murders, assaults, and firearms-related counts, primarily in Baltimore’s Northeastern and Northern Districts.

“This criminal organization created a wave of violence that changed lives and devastated families across communities,” said Attorney General Brown. “I am committed to ensuring Marylanders have the safe neighborhoods they deserve, free from violence and crime. These guilty pleas send a clear message to violent offenders that their time is up.”

On February 5, 2024, Johnson pleaded guilty before Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Charles Dorsey to participating in a criminal organization; two counts of first-degree murder, for the murders of Deonte Henderson and London Stuckey; and use of a handgun in commission of a crime of violence. Johnson, who was 19 years old at the time of the offenses, was sentenced to life incarceration suspending all but 40 years. Briggs also pleaded guilty before Judge Dorsey to participating in a criminal organization and two counts of illegal possession of a regulated firearm by a prohibited person. Briggs was sentenced to 35 years of incarceration, suspending all but 15 years, with the first 10 years to be served without the possibility of parole, and five years of supervised probation.

The investigation was led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Baltimore City Police Department, and the Maryland Attorney General’s Office, in coordination

with the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. The investigation began after the attempted murder of Perry Wainwright and the homicide of Deonte Henderson, who was shot and killed in the 600 block of Wyanoke Avenue in Baltimore City on February 12, 2020. The investigation revealed that toolmarks on shell casings left at the homicide scene were consistent with the toolmarks on shell casings left at multiple other violent crime scenes, which enabled law enforcement to identify the members of the criminal organization, known as the "39 Babies" or the "GreenTeam," as responsible for the crimes.

Notably, the number "39" in the organization's name relates to the 21239 zip code in northeastern Baltimore City, where most of its members reside. The organization utilized threats and violence to control its territory, advance its reputation, and to punish adversaries. Specifically, investigators learned that the organization engaged in a number of shootings, including the December 2019 murder of London Stuckey in the 5600 block of Woodmont Avenue in Baltimore City, and eight additional attempted murders throughout Baltimore City. The organization's members also illegally possessed, obtained, and traded firearms within and outside of their organization in Baltimore City. A total of 19 firearms were recovered during the investigation, along with ammunition and controlled dangerous substances packaged for street-level distribution. Johnson and Briggs were two of 11 defendants charged in this [investigation](#).

During the sentencing hearing, the mother of victim Deonte Henderson spoke about the pain caused by the death of her son, saying, "I wish that no mother or father or parent has to go through this... you don't understand what I've had to go through over the last four years...I can't go home and I can't leave without thinking about my son...he was murdered two blocks from my house."

Another individual, who spoke on behalf of the family of victim London Stucky, stated, "It pains me to know that we're standing here and have to go through this...The family is devastated. The fact that we have to sit here and sentence a young man to prison because of mistakes he made pains me... You have to be held accountable for the decisions you make, and with today's proceeding, I hope that Mr. Johnson understands that accountability goes a long way."

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked his Criminal Division, specifically, the Organized Crime Unit, Unit Chief Paul Halliday, and Assistant Attorneys General Jennifer Doud, Colin McDaniels, and David Wiseman. Along with the ATF and the Baltimore City Police Department, Attorney General Brown also thanked the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, Ivan J. Bates, for his Office's assistance in this investigation.

Three remaining indicted defendants are still awaiting trial. 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.

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