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ATF BALTIMORE REPORTS ITS YEAR END INVESTIGATIONS RESULTS

BALTIMORE — Acting Special Agent in Charge (SAC) David L. McCain, of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Baltimore Field Division, released the first year-end report on ATF significant cases today.

“ATF and our law enforcement partners are committed to making our streets safer,” said McCain. “With every successful investigation and prosecution, we are showing our citizens that our hard work, our investigative knowledge, and our expertise have made a significant impact on reducing crime in our communities. These successful investigations and prosecutions demonstrate that ATF will not cease in our relentless pursuit to put violent offenders behind bars.”

ATF’s number one domestic priority focuses exclusively on violent crime. The bureau regulates the firearms and explosives industries, which gives it unique statutory authority and jurisdiction over these “tools of the trade” used by street gangs and violent offenders to threaten public safety.

The attached Fact Sheet is broken down into several areas that highlight the work ATF and its partners are doing in the areas of violent crime, firearms trafficking, gun store burglaries/robberies, arson investigations, and regulatory efforts.

“These successful investigations exemplify the power of unified law enforcement and the positive results that can be accomplished through the strength of partnerships,” explained McCain. “ATF recognizes that we cannot do this alone. Those agencies that work with us are critical to our success in these investigations.”

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GANG AND VIOLENT CRIME INVESTIGATIONS

OPERATION COUMADIN: On Feb. 25, 2008, Baltimore's Violent Crime Impact Team (VCIT) culminated a 14-month long investigation into a very violent group of gang members who call themselves the "Tree Top Piru" or TTP. Twenty-eight (28) gang members have been charged in the racketeering conspiracy, with only one who remains at large. To date, three defendants have pleaded guilty, and one defendant has been sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. Additionally, one of the suspects charged and arrested in this investigation was Ronnie Thomas, the so-called narrator from the "Stop Snitching" videos. Each of the defendants charged with drug trafficking conspiracy face a maximum sentence of life in prison; and each of the 28 defendants charged in count one with the RICO conspiracy face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

THIRD TTP BLOODS GANG MEMBER PLEADS GUILTY IN

RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY: On Aug. 1, 2008, Shaneka Penix, 22, of Dundalk, Md., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to conduct and participate in the activities of a racketeering enterprise known as the Tree Top Piru Bloods (TTP Bloods).

"STOP SNITCHING" CAMERAMAN SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN

FEDERAL PRISON ON DRUG AND GUN CHARGES: On Aug. 20, 2008, Akiba Matthews, 35, of Baltimore, was sentenced to 30 years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for possession with intent to distribute heroin, possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime and possession of a gun by a convicted felon. According to trial testimony, Matthews was the cameraman and appeared in portions of the first "Stop Snitching" video.

ALLEN GILL PLEADS GUILTY DURING TRIAL TO THREE MURDERS AND DRUG CONSPIRACY CHARGES — 40 YEAR SENTENCE EXPECTED:

On June 27, 2008, after four days of trial, Allen Gill, 28, of Baltimore, pleaded guilty to three counts of using a gun to commit murder in aid of racketeering and one count of conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine, cocaine and heroin. According to the statement of facts presented with his guilty plea, from 1999 to April 2007, Gill was a member of the Latrobe Organization, a drug and firearms organization, which operated in Latrobe Homes in East Baltimore. Co-defendant Harry Burton, 28, of Baltimore, pleaded guilty on June 23, 2008, to the same charges and is expected to be sentenced to 60 years in prison at his sentencing on Sept. 28, 2008.

TWENTY-FIRST MEMBER OF MS-13 CONVICTED OF RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY, MURDER CONSPIRACY AND MURDER:

On Aug. 8, 2008, a

federal jury convicted Israel Ernesto Palacios, also known as Homie, 31, of Silver Spring, Md., of conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise, conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering, murder in aid of racketeering, use of a firearm in relation to a crime of violence, and murder resulting from use of a gun during a crime of violence. According to testimony, two MS-13 members shot and killed Nancy Diaz, and shot another girl in the face and stabbed her twice in the chest to attempt to make sure she was dead, and then left the scene. To date, 50 gang members have been charged with various federal offenses, with 30 defendants charged in the RICO conspiracy case. Twenty-one (21) MS-13 gang members have been convicted thus far in this RICO conspiracy case.

WIFE OF MS-13 MEMBER SENTENCED FOR OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE:

On Aug. 29, 2008, Wendy Garcia, 25, of Hyattsville, Md., was sentenced to three years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for obstruction of justice in connection with the murder of an MS-13 gang member by other MS-13 members.

MS-13 LEADER SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON ON RACKETEERING, MURDER AND FIREARMS CHARGES:

On June 9, 2008, Israel Ramos Cruz, a/k/a "Taylor," a/k/a "Sastre," 30, of Wheaton, Md., was sentenced to life in prison after he was convicted of conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise, conspiracy to commit murder in aid of racketeering, murder in aid of racketeering, witness tampering murder, murder resulting from use of a gun, assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering, being an alien in possession of a gun and ammunition, and an additional consecutive 35 years for two counts of use and carrying of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence.

ARSON INVESTIGATIONS

SERIAL ARSONIST PLEADS GUILTY TO SETTING 9 FIRES AT SPRINGHILL LAKE APARTMENTS:

On Aug. 14, 2008, Jeremiah Christopher Jones, 26, of Greenbelt, Md., pleaded guilty to nine counts of arson at the Springhill Lake apartment complex. According to the plea agreement, during the six-month period between March 25, 2007, and Aug. 2, 2007, Jones intentionally set nine fires within the Springhill Lake complex in Greenbelt, resulting in over \$2 million in damages. Jones used a lighter to set fire to items, including clothes, in concealed spaces because the confined spaces were close to other materials such as wiring, which would continue to burn after he had set the fire. Jones faces a mandatory minimum of five years and a maximum of 20 years in prison on each of the nine counts.

MEMBER OF REMINGTON MOB DRUG GANG SENTENCED TO 12 YEARS FOR CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE COCAINE AND ARSON:

On June 26, 2008, Eric Robinson, 27, of Baltimore, was sentenced to 12 years in prison followed by five years of supervised release for conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine and for arson. According to his guilty plea, from

January 1992 through April 2005, Robinson was a member of a drug organization called the Remington Mob, which distributed cocaine and crack cocaine in the Remington area of Baltimore.

OWINGS MILLS MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN CONNECTION WITH ARSON FIRE AT HIS RESIDENCE: On July 28, 2008, Keith T. McMahon, 41, of Owings Mills, Md., pleaded guilty to arson in connection with the Jan. 29, 2008, burning of his home located on Caves Road in Owings Mills. A firefighter was injured during the suppression of the blaze. Pursuant to his guilty plea, McMahon admitted that in mid-January 2008, he offered someone \$10,000 to burn down McMahon's home on Caves Road. The Baltimore County Fire Department responded to the fire and a firefighter was injured when he fell through the floor of the house while trying to put out the fire. McMahon then filed an insurance claim for the damage to his house and property, and received money and benefits from the insurance company.

COCKEYSVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO OVER TWO YEARS IN CONNECTION WITH ARSON FIRE AT CAVES ROAD RESIDENCE: On Sept. 5, 2008, Scott Ensor, 32, of Cockeysville, Md., was sentenced to 30 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for conspiracy to commit arson in connection with the Jan. 29, 2008, burning of a home belonging to Keith T. McMahon, located on Caves Road in Owings Mills. A firefighter was injured during the suppression of the blaze.

GANG LEADER RE-SENTENCED TO 80 YEARS IN PRISON FOR JAN. 15, 2005, FIREBOMBING ATTEMPT: On Aug. 22, 2008, Terrence Smith, 27, was re-sentenced to 80 years in prison, followed by 5 years of supervised release. Smith, along with co-defendants Nakie Harris, 32 and Richard Royal, 24, both of Baltimore, was convicted by a federal jury on Dec. 13, 2005, of conspiracy to commit witness tampering, witness tampering by attempted murder, use of firearms in a crime of violence, using fire and explosives in a felony and making firearms in connection with the Jan. 15, 2005, arson of a residence located in the Harwood community of Baltimore. Smith had appealed his conviction and original sentence of 80 years in prison to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals based on several issues including his sentencing. The Fourth Circuit found in favor of the government on all issues and remanded the case for re-sentencing to allow the Court to supplement the record.

BALTIMORE MAN SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR JUNE 2, 2007, FIREBOMBING: On May 1, 2008, Marcus Crandell, 22, of Baltimore, was sentenced to 30 years in prison, followed by five years of supervised release for using a destructive device in connection with the firebombing on June 2, 2007, of Ronnie Bundy's residence. Crandell also pleaded guilty in Baltimore City Circuit Court to second degree murder in the death Mr. Bundy on June 19, 2007, and was sentenced to 30 years in prison, to be served concurrent with his federal sentence.

MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN PRISON IN ARSON AND INSURANCE FRAUD SCHEME:

On April 28, 2008, James Walthall, 41, of Randallstown, Md., a police officer for the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), was sentenced to five years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for mail fraud in connection with a scheme in which he arranged for the burning of a vehicle he owned and two vehicles owned by other MTA employees in order to avoid repossession and further loan payments, and to have the car insurance companies pay the outstanding loan balances on the vehicles.

BALTIMORE EXILE/PG EXILE/FED-UP

DEATH PENALTY CHARGES FOR MURDERING A WITNESS: On August 5, 2008, the United States Attorney's Office filed a notice stating that it will seek the death penalty in the prosecution of Patrick Albert Byers, Jr., 23, of Baltimore, for the murder of Carl Stanley Lackl on July 2, 2007. A superseding indictment returned alleges that Byers and his co-defendants committed the murder-for-hire of Mr. Lackl in Baltimore County because he was an eyewitness to a murder committed by Byers in Baltimore City.

BALTIMORE FELON EXILED TO MORE THAN 15 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ILLEGALLY POSSESSING FIREARMS: On June 26, 2008, a U.S. District Judge sentenced Michael Martin, 28, of Baltimore, to 188 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release for being a felon in possession in a firearm. The Judge enhanced Martin's sentence after finding that he was an armed career criminal based on two previous drug convictions and a conviction for assault with intent to murder.

COLLIN HAWKINS SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON ON FEDERAL CARJACKING AND GUN CHARGES: On May 13, 2008, Collin Hawkins, 24, was sentenced to 30 years in prison, followed by three years of supervised release following his conviction in February for carjacking, use of a handgun in a crime of violence, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

BRIAN ROSE INDICTED IN MURDER OF ATTEMPTED CARJACKING VICTIM: On April 1, 2008, a federal grand jury indicted Brian Keith Rose, 22, of Baltimore, in connection with the January 2006 murder of the victim of an attempted carjacking. According to the three count indictment, on Jan. 5, 2006, Rose attempted to carjack a Mercedes-Benz from Warren Tee Fleming, who was shot and killed.

BALTIMORE FELON EXILED TO 22 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON ON GUN AND DRUG VIOLATIONS: On Aug. 26, 2008, Frank Bailey, 39, of Baltimore, was sentenced to 22 years in prison followed by five years of supervised release for distribution and possession with intent to distribute cocaine, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime and possession of a firearm and ammunition by a

convicted felon. Judge Bennett enhanced Bailey's sentence upon finding that he is a career offender based on eight previous convictions for robbery, assault and illegal drug distribution and possession.

CAREER OFFENDER EXILED TO 30 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON ON CARJACKING AND FIREARM CHARGES: On Sept. 5, 2008, Donald Griffin, 44, of Baltimore, was sentenced to 30 years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for carjacking, using and brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence, and possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon. The Judge enhanced Griffin's sentence upon finding that he is a career offender based on two prior convictions for possession with intent to distribute narcotics.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY MAN EXILED TO OVER 17 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS: On Aug. 28, 2008, Lamont A. Toyer, 35, of Upper Marlboro, was sentenced to 210 months in prison followed by five years of supervised release for being a felon in possession of firearms. The Judge enhanced Toyer's sentence upon finding that he is an armed career criminal based on three prior convictions for possession with intent to distribute cocaine, possession with intent to distribute cocaine base, and assault.

SUITLAND MAN SENTENCED TO 12 ½ YEARS IN PRISON ON GUN AND DRUG CHARGES: On July 29, 2008, Marvin Wayne Williams, Jr., 30, of Suitland, Md., was sentenced to 151 months in prison followed by five years of supervised release for being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition. Williams was convicted on Feb. 7, 1997, of attempted murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony in the Circuit Court of Prince William County, Va., and was prohibited from possessing firearms.

FORESTVILLE FELON EXILED TO 15 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR GUN AND DRUG CRIMES: On Aug. 18, 2008, Roberto Garcia, 33, of Forestville, Md., was sentenced to 15 years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for being a felon in possession of a gun and ammunition, and for distributing cocaine. The Judge enhanced Garcia's sentence upon finding that he is a career offender based on two previous convictions for robbery with a dangerous weapon and possession with intent to distribute marijuana.

OPERATION FED-UP YIELDS SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES: Operation FED-UP is an "EXILE" type project with the Wilmington Department of Police and the U.S. Attorney's Office. FED-UP stands for Federal Enforcement and Detention in Urban Policing. Since February 2007, all federal felons in possession of firearms arrested by Wilmington Police are turned over to ATF for charges in federal court. To date, 82 defendants have been charged, 87 firearms recovered, and the conviction rate is 93 percent.

FIREARMS TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATIONS

BOWIE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING 34 GUNS: On Sept. 3, 2008, Michael A. Henderson, 22, of Bowie, Md., pleaded guilty to possessing and selling stolen firearms and stealing firearms from a federally licensed firearms dealer. According to the plea agreement, on June 13, 2008, Henderson and a co-conspirator broke into a federally licensed firearms dealer, Green Top Sporting Goods, in Glen Allen, Va., and used a baseball bat, bolt cutters, hammers and duffel bags to steal 34 firearms.

ALABAMA AND NEW YORK GUN MEN INDICTED FOR BRINGING ILLEGAL GUNS TO MARYLAND: On May 19, 2008, a grand jury indicted Moises Castillo, Jr., 25, of Tarrant, Ala., and Otis Gomez-Zapata, 28, of the Bronx, N.Y., for conspiring to sell and selling firearms without a license. According to the two-count indictment, between Castillo and Gomez-Zapata they located buyers for firearms, and then arranged to purchase firearms from pawn brokers and individuals. They then met with firearms buyers and sold them firearms in exchange for cash, charging a fee that varied with the type of firearm purchased. The indictment charges crimes that occurred between October 2007 and January 2008.

INTELLIGENCE

NIBIN: Baltimore's Intelligence Unit monitors the success of the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) program. Through the NIBIN program, ATF deploys Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) equipment to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies for their use in imaging and comparing crime-gun evidence. The system also makes it possible to share intelligence across jurisdictional boundaries, enabling federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to work together to stop violent criminals. Since ATF and its partner agencies began using this technology, over 1 million pieces of crime scene evidence have been entered, while approximately 25,000 "hits" have been logged into the system.

In Maryland, the existing machines are located in the following jurisdictions: Baltimore County, Baltimore City, Prince George's County, and the Maryland State Police. Montgomery County has been approved for a NIBIN machine and the process is underway for them to receive the machine within several months.

For fiscal year 2007, the number of NIBIN "hits" is as follows:

Prince Georges County	40
Baltimore City	65
Maryland State Police	3
Baltimore County	10

FEDERAL FIREARMS/EXPLOSIVES LICENSEE INSPECTIONS

During fiscal year 2008, ATF industry operations investigators inspected 134 federal firearms licensees (FFLs). Of these inspections, a total of 54 were inspections of new license applicants, one of which was denied. Of the remaining 80 firearms inspections, 32 FFLs received a warning letter, 10 received a warning conference with an additional warning letter, 2 FFL's surrendered their license in lieu of administrative action, and 2 FFL's had their license revoked.

During this same period, investigators conducted a total of 56 explosives inspections. Of these inspections, a total of 39 were Safe Explosives Act inspections of explosives licensees/permittees and 17 were inspections of new license/permit applicants.

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