



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of Maryland*

*Rod J. Rosenstein  
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc  
Public Information Officer*

*36 South Charles Street  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201*

*410-209-4800  
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462  
410-209-4885  
FAX 410-962-3091  
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

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**Contact AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or  
MARCIA MURPHY at (410) 209-4885**

**TWO BALTIMORE MEN SENTENCED FOR ROBBERY AND GUN CHARGES**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Leon Baker, age 25, of Baltimore was sentenced today to 14 years in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release for robbery affecting interstate commerce, and using and possessing a firearm during a drug trafficking crime, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Co-defendant Lawrence Shird, Jr., age 28, also of Baltimore was sentenced to 6 years in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release for robbery affecting interstate commerce and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

According to the statements of facts presented at their guilty pleas on February 3, 2006, Baker and Shird went to an automobile dealership on December 30, 2004 in the 5700 block of Reisterstown Road in Baltimore. Baker spoke with an employee about his dissatisfaction with a car he had purchased there some time before, and demanded to speak on the telephone with the owner. Baker and the owner had a heated conversation on the telephone. After the call, Baker put on a pair of latex gloves and brandished a firearm, demanding access to the files of the business as well as the keys to a 1990 Lincoln Town Car that was on the lot. After breaking into a locked office and taking some documents, Baker and Shird took one of the employees at gun point to another area of the business where the keys to the cars on the lot were kept. As they left the office area, Shird threatened a second employee. Baker and Shird took the keys, put a stolen 60-day temporary tag on the Lincoln, and left the business in the stolen vehicle.

On January 1, 2005, Shird and Baker were shooting off firearms in the back yard of a residence in Baltimore City. Baltimore Police Department patrol officers observed Shird and Baker firing into the air, reloading, firing again, and then going inside the residence. When the officers knocked on the front door, the occupant of the residence consented to a search of the premises. Shird was found in a second floor bedroom and Baker was found in a third floor bedroom. Among the items recovered during the search were two firearms and ammunition.

On September 14, 2005, Baker was driving the stolen 1990 Lincoln Town Car when Baltimore police officers, who were members of the Regional Auto Theft Task Force, determined that the tags were stolen. Officers surrounded the vehicle with their patrol cars and Baker attempted to ram the police vehicle behind him to get away. When officers broke the side windows of the Lincoln to grab Baker, he stopped the car and put up his hands. While being pulled from the vehicle,

a fully-loaded 9 millimeter Beretta handgun with an obliterated serial number fell out from under Baker's shirt. He was arrested, and claimed to be Corey Harris. During a subsequent search, officers recovered from his pants pockets a fully-loaded Taurus .38 caliber handgun and a plastic bag with 16 black top vials containing approximately 1.17 grams of cocaine base and four plastic baggies containing approximately 20.31 grams of cocaine base.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked the Baltimore City Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for their investigative work in this case. Mr. Rosenstein also praised Assistant United States Attorney Greg Welsh, who prosecuted the case.