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PRESS RELEASE

Investigation Shuts Down Firearm Burglary Ring *Six Indicted for Alleged Conspiracy to Commit Thefts of Firearms, Rifles and Shotguns for Use in Drug Trafficking and Violent Crimes*

BALTIMORE, MD (April 17, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced the indictment of six individuals for allegedly conspiring to commit burglaries in order to steal firearms, rifles and shotguns.

The indictments and arrests come at the end of a yearlong investigation that was the product of collaboration between the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives - Baltimore Field Division, the Baltimore Police Department and the Organized Crime Unit of the Maryland Attorney General's Office.

The indictments allege that over the course of two days in early August 2015, some of the defendants broke into a storage unit in the Park Heights area of Baltimore City, and stole approximately 60 firearms. These included several shotguns and semi-automatic assault rifles. The defendants subsequently sold, traded, and rented the stolen firearms to other individuals for use in the commission of drug trafficking offenses and violent crimes. In addition, the defendants kept many of the firearms, using them to commit several carjackings and armed robberies throughout the city of Baltimore.

Many of the individuals charged in the indictments have arrests and convictions for crimes of violence including assault, burglary, armed robbery, and armed carjacking.

The charged defendants are Nathan Wilson, Taquan Ervin, Aamir Benton, Tione Smith, Damondre Woods, and Daesean Whitaker.

“These burglars were illegally selling and distributing stolen firearms and using them to commit acts of violence,” said Attorney General Frosh. “I commend the federal agents who worked tirelessly on this year-long investigation to ensure our prosecutors can bring these criminals to justice, and make our communities safer.”

“Protecting the citizens of Baltimore from violent crime is ATF's number one priority,” said Daniel L. Board, Jr., the Special Agent in Charge for the ATF Baltimore Field Division. “The

men and women of the ATF will continue to relentlessly pursue any criminals who attempt to acquire, distribute or use stolen weapons and we will mobilize all of our resources to ensure that they are held accountable for their violent and dangerous actions. These efforts epitomize ATF's dedication to protecting both our communities and our firearm industry partners.”

The Attorney General extended special thanks to the Organized Crime Unit, which is responsible for the prosecution of these indictments, as well as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives - Baltimore Field Division, Baltimore Police Department and the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. A person is innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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