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TWO BALTIMORE MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO ARMED CARJACKING

Baltimore, Maryland - Kenard Lawson, age 19, of Baltimore, pleaded guilty today to carjacking and using a gun during the carjacking. Co-defendant Keith Dorsey, age 22, also of Baltimore, pleaded guilty on April 5, 2010 to the same offenses.

The guilty pleas were announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Special Agent in Charge Theresa R. Stoop of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives - Baltimore Field Division; Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy; and Baltimore Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld III.

According to their guilty pleas, on March 21, 2009, Lawson and two others entered a liquor store on South Charles Street in Baltimore. One of the robbers pointed a semiautomatic handgun at the owner and hit him in the head with the weapon. The robber removed cash from the cash register and from a cash box in the rear of the store. A robber also took a semi-automatic pistol from the owner and gave it to Lawson.

At some time on or before April 13, 2009, Lawson gave the gun he obtained during the March 21 robbery to Dorsey. On April 13, Dorsey used the gun to order a driver of a Toyota Camry to drive Dorsey and Lawson to Greenmount Avenue. The victim offered to give Lawson and Dorsey the keys to his car, but the defendants compelled the victim to drive them. Dorsey sat in the front passenger seat, pointing the gun at the victim, while Lawson sat in the rear of the car, instructing the victim where to drive.

When the car stopped at a red light at the intersection of North Avenue and Mount Royal Avenue, the victim saw a marked Baltimore Police Department cruiser. The victim opened the driver's side door, rolled out of the car, stood up and ran toward the police officers, exclaiming, "they got a gun, they got a gun." As the car drifted forward — the victim had left the vehicle in drive — Lawson opened the rear passenger side door and fled, shedding a sweat jacket he had been wearing. Dorsey also fled from the vehicle, dropping the gun as he ran.

A short time later, the victim approached a law enforcement officer and pointed out Dorsey, who had circled back to Mount Royal Avenue. Dorsey was detained. Lawson was also apprehended a few blocks away.

Both defendants face a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for the carjacking; and a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison, consecutive to any other term of imprisonment, for brandishing a gun in furtherance of the

carjacking. As part of their plea agreements, both defendants have agreed to the imposition of 114 months in prison. U.S. District Judge Richard D. Bennett has scheduled sentencing for Lawson on May 26, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. and for Dorsey on May 27, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorney Thiruvendran Vignarajah, who is prosecuting the case.