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TWO MORE PLEAD GUILTY IN TTP BLOODS CASE

Total of Seven Defendants Have Pleaded Guilty

Baltimore, Maryland - Antonio Smith, age 26, of Baltimore, pleaded guilty today to three counts of being a felon in possession of a firearm and Tracey Whiting, age 24, also of Baltimore pleaded guilty yesterday to conspiracy to conduct and participate in the activities of a racketeering enterprise known as the Tree Top Piru Bloods (TTP Bloods), announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein and Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy. This case is the result of a long-term joint investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office and the United States Attorney's Office.

"These two violent offenders will no longer be able to plague Baltimore with illegal firearms in pursuit of their violent crime mission," says ATF Special Agent in Charge Theresa R. Stoop, "We have successfully removed them from society."

According to Tracey Whiting's plea agreement and other court documents, TTP Bloods originated from a street gang known as "the Bloods" that was formed in Los Angeles, California in the early 1970s. As time passed, the Bloods spread to other locations and broke into individual "sets." One such Bloods set based in Compton, California was called Piru Bloods. From this set emerged a subset known as Tree Top Pirus (TTP). The name derived from a group of streets in Compton named after trees.

TTP spread throughout the country, including Maryland. TTP in Maryland has its roots in a local gang which began in the Washington County Detention Center in Hagerstown, Maryland in about 1999. The gang was formed for mutual protection in response to the aggression of other inmates from Baltimore. TTP spread throughout Maryland mostly as a result of recruitment from inside Maryland prisons. Over time, a group of female gang members formed a subset of TTP known as the Tree Top Pirettes.

As part of the conspiracy gang members of TTP would meet regularly to discuss past acts of violence and other crimes committed by gang members against rival gang members and others; to notify one another about gang members who were arrested or incarcerated; to discuss the disciplining of TTP gang members; to discuss police interactions with gang members; to share with one another the identities of individuals who may be cooperating with law enforcement and propose actions to be taken against those individuals; to plan and agree upon the commission of future

crimes, including murders, robberies, drug trafficking, and assaults, and the means to cover up these crimes; and to reinforce gang rules. TTP gang members and associates of TTP purchased, maintained and circulated a collection of firearms for use in criminal activity by TTP members. In addition, TTP gang members and associates of TTP committed acts of murder, and other acts of violence against rival gang members and imposed discipline within TTP itself, and committed violent acts on other occasions as deemed necessary.

According to her plea agreement, from at least 2005 through February 2008, Tracy Whiting was a member of the TTP Bloods, and as part of the racketeering conspiracy distributed heroin, crack cocaine and other drugs and collected drug proceeds on behalf of the TTP Bloods. Whiting was responsible for the distribution of between 20 and 40 grams of heroin. In addition, Whiting was overheard in telephone conversations discussing gang activities, including her desire to obtain a gun. On December 29, 2005, Whiting possessed a loaded firearm, while she was in stolen car with other female TTP members shortly after the car's owner had been carjacked by two armed women. Finally, in furtherance of the racketeering conspiracy Whiting obstructed justice by conspiring with Kevin Gary and another gang member to interfere with a state murder trial in which Kevin Gary was a defendant, by talking with a juror and intimidating a witness.

According to Smith's plea agreement, on May 2, 2007, law enforcement officers conducting surveillance of a TTP Bloods gang member saw Smith provide the gang member with a Norinco 762 caliber rifle and a Century Arms 308 caliber rifle. Law enforcement saw Smith supply a TTP Bloods gang member with a Magnum 12 gauge shotgun on July 19, 2007. On July 23, 2007 law enforcement officers saw Smith with a 44 caliber revolver, which he was prohibited from possessing due to previous felony convictions.

Under their plea agreements, if accepted by the Judge, Smith faces a penalty of 15 years in prison and Whiting faces 21 to 27 months in prison. U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. has scheduled sentencing for Smith and Whiting on April 23, 2009 at 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., respectively.

Twenty-four additional gang members have been charged in the racketeering conspiracy. Steve Willock, age 29, Van Sneed, age 32, and Kevin Gary, age 27, all of Baltimore, Maryland, Shaneka Penix, age 22, of Dundalk, Maryland and Orlando Gilyard, age 21, of Woodlawn, Maryland, pleaded guilty to the RICO conspiracy. Willock was sentenced to 25 years in prison, Gilyard was sentenced to over 9 ½ years in prison and Penix to 10 years in prison. The remaining defendants' charges are pending.

United States Attorney Rosenstein and Baltimore City State's Attorney Jessamy praised the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Baltimore City Police Department, Baltimore County Police Department, Wicomico County State's Attorney Office, Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, Washington County Narcotics Task Force, Western Correctional Institution, North Branch Correctional Institution, Anne Arundel County Police Department, the Hagerstown Police Department and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for their investigation of this Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case.

Mr. Rosenstein and Mrs. Jessamy also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason Weinstein, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Chris Mason, a cross-designated Baltimore City Assistant State's Attorney, who are prosecuting the case and Assistant State's Attorney LaRai Forrest who assisted in the prosecution.