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VIOLENT SOUTHWEST PHILADELPHIA DRUG GANG INDICTED
FOR RACKETEERING

Early morning law enforcement efforts result in arrests

PHILADELPHIA - An indictment¹ was unsealed today against members of the so-called "Harlem Boys", charged in a conspiracy to participate in a racketeering enterprise and other crimes, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger, Special Agent-in-Charge Mark Potter with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey. In addition to the RICO conspiracy, the 73-count indictment charges attempted murder in aid of racketeering, Hobbs Act robbery, carjacking, assault in aid of racketeering, numerous substantive drug offenses, and firearms offenses that include use of firearms during the commission of violent crimes and drug crimes. The indictment names 17 defendants, 10 of which were arrested this morning during a law enforcement operation by ATF and Philadelphia Police, in Southwest Philadelphia.

The indictment alleges that from at least 2001, defendant Terrance Hamm began running a violent drug operation in and around the Bartram Village Housing Development ("BVHD"), in Southwest Philadelphia. The gang, which also included defendants Ramel Moten, Merrell Hobbs, Omar Roane, Reginald Stephens, Damon Turner, Bryan Hill, Warren Stokes, Allen Parker, Khalil Allen, Andre Tiller, Tayale Shelton, Hikeem Torrence, and Shyheem Davis, used the names "Harlem Boys," "Young Hit Men," and "54." According to the indictment, members of the enterprise and their associates committed acts of violence, and attempted or threatened to commit acts of violence, including murder and robbery, in order to protect and expand the criminal enterprise, and to promote a climate of fear through violence and intimidation.

The gang allegedly committed violent acts against outsiders who entered or attempted to enter the BVHD without the consent of the enterprise. For example, when defendants Omar Roane and Merrell Hobbs encountered victim K.S. on August 10, 2006, defendants Omar Roane and Merrell Hobbs carjacked K.S.'s vehicle at gunpoint, stole the car keys, and then fired shots at K.S. and others as they drove away in the carjacked vehicle. On October 5, 2006, defendants Omar

¹ An Indictment or Information is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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Roane and Allen Parker assaulted and shot at victim J.C. The defendants also committed acts of violence against persons whom they believed might be trying to sell controlled substances within the BVHD. For example, on February 27, 2007, defendant Terrance Hamm took a cash payment for crack cocaine, then refused to deliver the drugs and threatened to shoot the individual who supplied the cash when he attempted to get the money back.

“Violent drug gangs degrade the quality of life in the areas where they operate,” said Memeger. “Today’s indictment, along with the sweeping arrests and searches that followed, we hope, will serve to alleviate some of the violence and dangerous atmosphere that the residents of Southwest Philadelphia have had to endure.”

“Today’s indictment and subsequent arrests demonstrate ATF’s dedication to targeting violent offenders - ‘the worst of the worst’ - in our communities,” said ATF Special Agent-in-Charge Mark Potter. “ATF is committed to allocating its resources, along with our State and local partners, in keeping our neighborhoods a safer place to live and work.”

“This investigation is another example of the continued cooperation between the Philadelphia Police Department and our Federal Partners,” said Commissioner Charles Ramsey. “We will keep working together to reduce violence in our City.”

The indictment alleges that after a member would identify a target, the group would frequently rob that victim and then share in the profits. Members traded guns among themselves to use during violent crimes - including robberies, carjackings, and assaults - as well as when selling controlled substances for the “Harlem Boys.”

It is further alleged that members of the gang conspired to distribute crack cocaine, and distributed or possessed crack cocaine, marijuana, and prescription medications such as Xanax. This was done within 1,000 feet of the Richard Allen Preparatory School, as well as on or near the playground and basketball courts within the BVHD. The Harlem Boys and their associates used apartments, including those rented by Melika Parker and Roneisha Scott, inside the BVHD, to stash and cook cocaine base (“crack”) and firearms, and as sales locations for controlled substances.

The acts of violence alleged in the indictment include (among others):

January 19, 2008: defendants Omar Roane, Merrell Hobbs, and Allen Parker assaulted Z.F. by shooting at him while he was seated in his vehicle near the BVHD entrance.

May 27, 2008: defendant Allen Parker attempted to rob K.D., while K.D. was seated inside his vehicle, parked inside the BVHD. Defendant Parker shot at and hit K.D.’s vehicle.

October 9, 2009: defendant Ramel Moten used a shotgun to shoot at one of his drug dealers.

November 9, 2009: defendant Warren Stokes shot and injured T.W.

November 24, 2009: defendant Ramel Moten attempted to rob M.S. and shot M.S. during the attempted robbery.

April 7, 2010: defendant Ramel Moten attempted to intimidate T.W., who had been shot by defendant Warren Stokes, by attending a court hearing on the matter, making threatening gestures and statements toward T.W.

(See attachment for information regarding the defendants and potential penalties)

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Philadelphia Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Salvatore L. Astolfi and Kathy A. Stark.

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