

**FILED**

**10/18/2024**

**THOMAS G. BRUTON**  
**CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT**

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

LATAVION JOHNSON

CASE NUMBER: 24 CR 483

**CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. On or about October 18, 2024, at Chicago, in the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, and elsewhere, the defendant(s) violated:

*Code Section*

Title 18, United States Code, Section  
922(o)

*Offense Description*

knowingly possessed a machinegun, as that term is defined in Title 26, United States Code, Sections 5845, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(o)(1)

This criminal complaint is based upon these facts:

X Continued on the attached sheet.

*Robert Moubark*

ROBERT MOUBARK

Special Agent, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,  
Firearms & Explosives (ATF)

Pursuant to Fed. R. Crim. P. 4.1, this Complaint is presented by reliable electronic means. The above-named agent provided a sworn statement attesting to the truth of the Complaint and Affidavit by telephone.

Date: October 18, 2024

*Sheila Finnegan*  
*Judge's signature*

City and state: Chicago, Illinois

SHEILA FINNEGAN, U.S. Magistrate Judge  
*Printed name and title*

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

**AFFIDAVIT**

I, ROBERT MOUBARK, being duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I am a Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), and have been so employed since June 2021 years. My current responsibilities include the investigation of violent crimes, including, among others, shootings, vehicular hijackings, armed robberies, and the apprehension of violent fugitives.

2. As part of my duties as an ATF Special Agent, I investigate violations of the Gun Control Act of 1968, National Firearms Act of 1934, and other federal firearms statutes relating to the unlawful possession and trafficking of firearms. I have received training in the history of firearms laws and regulations, firearms criminal violations, interstate controls, firearms identification, and investigative social media analysis.

3. This affidavit is submitted in support of a criminal complaint alleging that LATAVION JOHNSON has violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(o)(1). Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause in support of a criminal complaint charging JOHNSON with knowing possession of a machinegun, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts that I

believe are necessary to establish probable cause to believe that the defendant committed the offense alleged in the complaint.

4. This case was investigated by the Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Chicago (CGIC). The CGIC is a multi-agency, joint-force collaboration to identify, investigate and prosecute prolific firearms offenders and their sources of crime guns.

5. The facts in this affidavit come from my personal observations, my training and experience, information obtained from other law enforcement members and witnesses, physical surveillance, my review of audio and video recordings, as well as open source and law enforcement databases, and JOHNSON's statements to me. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested warrants and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter.

#### **I. Summary of Probable Cause**

6. Based on my training and experience, I know that a machinegun conversion device (MCD) is, in summary, used to convert a firearm from a semiautomatic weapon to an automatic weapon, causing the firearm to shoot more than one shot by a single function of the trigger.

7. In summary, as described below, on October 17, 2024, during the execution of a federal search warrant on a residence located on the 600 block of west Englewood Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, (hereinafter the "Englewood Apartment") law enforcement observed and recovered an MCD from inside LaTavion JOHNSON's bedroom at the residence.

8. JOHNSON confirmed, in summary, that JOHNSON is familiar with MCDs and their ability to convert semiautomatic firearms into fully automatic firearms, and that the MCD recovered from JOHNSON's bedroom was JOHNSON's and that he knew it was designed to convert a semiautomatic firearm into a fully automatic firearm.

## **II. Facts Supporting Probable Cause**

9. According to Illinois Secretary of State records, JOHNSON resides at the Englewood Apartment in Chicago, Illinois, and is photographed immediately below in a photograph from that agency:



## **III. Firearms and MCDs in JOHNSON's Bedroom.**

10. On October 11, 2024, law enforcement obtained a search warrant for the Englewood Apartment. *See* Case No. 24 M 776 (N.D.I.L.) (Appenteng, J.) (under seal).

11. As described in the search warrant, the Englewood Apartment is a second-floor unit in a two-unit building, which contains multiple bedrooms, a living space, and bathrooms.

12. On or about October 17, 2024, at approximately 7:00 a.m., law enforcement executed the search warrant on the Englewood Apartment.

13. Shortly after entering the Englewood Apartment to execute the search warrant, law enforcement officers identified a bedroom with JOHNSON's nickname "Tavi," and current age "Age 22," labeled on the bedroom door. Inside JOHNSON's bedroom, officers observed JOHNSON and subsequently recovered an MCD in a tool bag on the windowsill of JOHNSON's bedroom, next to where JOHNSON was located in JOHNSON's bedroom. A blue-hooded sweatshirt and tools commonly used to convert semiautomatic firearms into fully automatic firearms were also recovered from JOHNSON's bedroom.

14. Based on my training and experience, I know that MCDs are commonly referred to as "auto sears," "switches," "Glock switches," or "buttons." Based on my training and experience, I know that an auto sear is a type of MCD that can be installed in or onto a firearm to convert a semiautomatic firearm into an automatic firearm, meaning that the firearm can automatically shoot more than one shot by a single function of the trigger, which allows ammunition to shoot, or spray, from the firearm as a machinegun.

15. I have examined the MCD located in JOHNSON's bedroom. Based on my training and experience, and the training and experience of other law enforcement

officers familiar with illegal firearms possession and MCDs, I believe that the MCD located in JOHNSON's bedroom is designed to be placed into a semiautomatic firearm to convert the firearm into a fully automatic firearm, meaning that with the MCD in place, a firearm could automatically shoot more than one shot by a single function of the trigger allowing ammunition to shoot, or spray, from the firearm as a machinegun.

16. Below is a photograph of the MCD recovered from JOHNSON's bedroom at the Englewood Apartment on October 17, 2024.



17. After locating JOHNSON and the MCD in JOHNSON's bedroom, JOHNSON was mirandized and subsequently agreed to speak with law enforcement. JOHNSON confirmed, in summary, that he was familiar with MCDs and how MCDs converted semiautomatic firearms into fully automatic firearms, capable of shooting more than round of ammunition by a single function of the trigger. JOHNSON also confirmed, in summary, that the MCD recovered from JOHNSON's bedroom, displayed above, was an "auto sear" that belonged to JOHNSON and that he

understood that the auto sear was designed to convert a semiautomatic rifle-style firearm into a fully automatic machinegun rifle.

#### **IV. JOHNSON's Prior Social Media Posts**

18. Based on my training and experience, I know that Instagram and Facebook, in summary, are free-access social networking services, accessible through their respective websites and their respective mobile applications, that allow subscribers to acquire and use Instagram or Facebook accounts, through which users can share messages, multimedia, and other information with other Instagram and Facebook users and the general public.

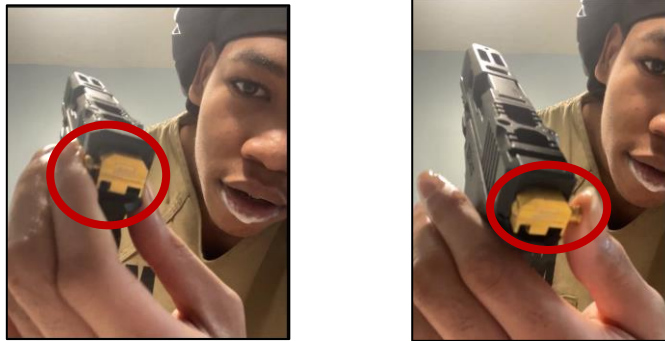
19. Since in or around February 2024 and continuing until in or around October 2024, I viewed multiple different videos posted throughout that timeframe by social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook associated with JOHNSON, whereby, in each account, photos of JOHNSON are displayed and the nickname, "Lil Tavi" regularly appears.

20. On April 22, 2024, the Honorable Gabriel E. Fuentes, United States Magistrate Judge, authorized a search warrant for social media accounts associated with JOHNSON's Instagram ("JOHNSON's Instagram") and Facebook ("JOHNSON's Facebook) accounts, under case number 24 M 292.

21. Based on JOHNSON's Illinois driver's license photograph, prior photos and video recordings of JOHNSON, and my personal observations and interactions with JOHNSON on October 17, the individual described and depicted in the below

videos and images is JOHNSON. JOHNSON also acknowledged, during his interview on October 17, his image in JOHNSON's Instagram and Facebook accounts.

22. According to law enforcement reports and Meta, Inc., records from the search warrant return of JOHNSON's Facebook, in one video, published by JOHNSON's Facebook in or around February 2024 and as depicted in the still images below, JOHNSON handles what appears to be a firearm fitted with a gold MCD, and states "switchy, this thing bitch easy to push," while appearing to toggle the MCD-fitted firearm between semiautomatic and fully automatic.



23. According to LEO reports and Meta, Inc. records from the search warrant return of JOHNSON's Facebook, in the same video published to Facebook in or around February 2024, JOHNSON audibly uses the expression "brrr brrr," while holding the same firearm fitted with a gold MCD.

24. Based on my training and experience, and the training and experience of other LEOs familiar with firearms and illegal possession of firearms, I know that the expression "brrr brrr" is used to mimic the sound of an automatic firearm firing multiple rounds of ammunition from a single trigger function.

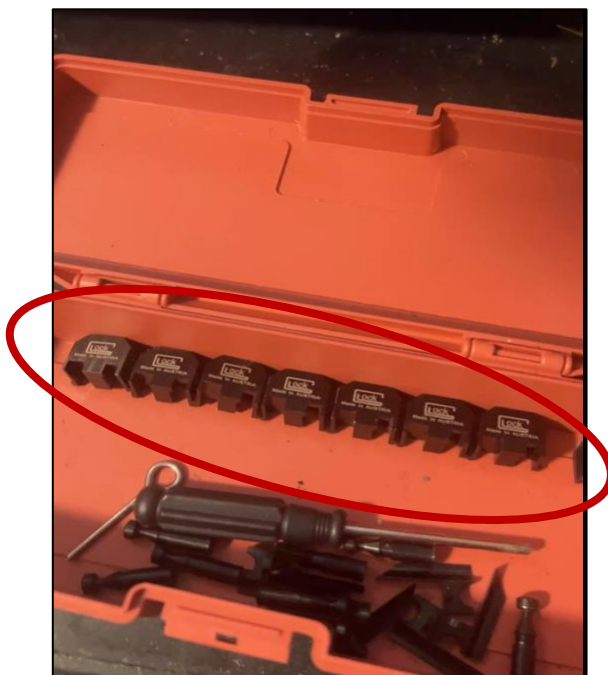


25. According to LEO reports and Meta, Inc., records from the search warrant return of JOHNSON's Facebook, in the same video published to Facebook in or around February 2024, JOHNSON states, in summary, that JOHNSON would "blow the switch outside," if twenty viewers joined his Facebook video stream. Based on my training and experience, and the training and experience of other LEOs familiar with firearms and illegal possession of firearms, I believe JOHNSON's statement means that, in summary, he offered to go outdoors to fire an MCD-fitted firearm with the MCD device enabled, thereby allowing the firearm to fire as a fully automatic weapon, if twenty viewers joined JOHNSON's Facebook live video stream.

26. According to LEO reports and Meta, Inc., records from the search warrant return of JOHNSON's Facebook, in the same video published to Facebook in or around February 2024, JOHNSON conducted what I, based on my training and experience, believe to be a function test on an apparent firearm fitted with a gold MCD.

27. Based on my training and experience, I know that a function test is a preliminary test that the user of a firearm can perform on a firearm fitted with an MCD to determine whether the MCD can actually fire multiple rounds of ammunition with a single trigger function. After reviewing the video of JOHNSON perform the function test on an apparent firearm fitted with an MCD, based on my training and experience, I believe the MCD-fitted firearm was a fully functioning automatic weapon.

28. According to LEO reports and Meta, Inc., records from the search warrant return of JOHNSON's Facebook, in the same video published to Facebook, in or around February 2024, JOHNSON is heard asking viewers of JOHNSON's Facebook account whether he should replace the gold MCD with a black MCD. As depicted immediately below, which is a still photograph from the video, the video then pans to a toolbox containing what appears to be approximately seven black MCDs, which are encircled in red for reference immediately below.



29. According to law enforcement reports and Meta, Inc., records from the search warrant return of JOHNSON's Instagram, in an Instagram video published on or about February 23, 2024, JOHNSON holds an apparent handgun fitted with an MCD and appears to use a single pull of the trigger to fire approximately three rounds into what appears to be a window. A caption to the video reads, "I 3 shot bursted dat bitch flawless switch." A still photograph from that video, immediately below, depicts approximately three rounds fired from the MCD-enabled firearm as they are dispersed into the air almost simultaneously (rounds are encircled in red):



30. Based on my training and experience, and the training and experience of other LEOs familiar with firearms and illegal firearms possession investigations,

I believe the caption “I 3 shot bursted dat bitch flawless switch,” describes what the video depicts; specifically, an MCD-fitted firearm with the MCD enabled, firing fully automatically, multiple rounds of ammunition using a single trigger function.

31. According to law enforcement reports, while continuing to monitor JOHNSON’s Facebook and Instagram accounts, on or about October 9, 2024, at approximately 9:46 p.m., law enforcement observed and preserved a video of JOHNSON’s Instagram account, in which, as set forth in the still images immediately below, JOHNSON shows himself on screen (left), displays an apparent clear semi-automatic firearm loaded with ammunition (center), and subsequently spreads multiple twenty dollar bills out over a blue-hooded sweatshirt (right). On the blue-hooded sweatshirt, next to the twenty dollar bills is an apparent auto sear or “switch,” (encircled below) and a cellular phone.



32. Based on my training and experience, and the training and experience of other law enforcement officers with experience in investigating illegal firearms possession, I believe that the above-described video depicts JOHNSON displaying a firearm with cash and an MCD.

33. On October 17, 2024, during JOHNSON's statement to law enforcement, JOHNSON confirmed that the firearms and MCDs depicted in JOHNSON's Facebook and Instagram accounts were real firearms and MCDs.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing facts, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that, on or about October 17, 2024, LaTavion JOHNSON knowingly possessed a machinegun, as it is defined in Title 26, United States Code, Section 5845(b), in violation of in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(o)(1),

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.

Robert Moubark

ROBERT MOUBARK  
Special Agent, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,  
Firearms & Explosives

SWORN TO AND AFFIRMED by telephone October 18, 2024.

Sheila Finnegan  
Honorable SHEILA FINNEGAN  
United States Magistrate Judge