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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATIVE EFFORTS LEAD TO MORE ARRESTS AGAINST MEMBERS OF A GUN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN MONTGOMERY, BERKS, LANCASTER AND PHILADELPHIA



TANISHA ALLEN

DARELL SMITH

DAVEESE SMITH

MALIQA JACK

DONAYA WILLIAMS

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Aug. 6, 2021) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, announced the arrests of **Daveese Smith**, 21, of Norristown; **Darell Smith**, 25, of Philadelphia; **Maliqa Jack**, 25 of Pottstown; **Donaya Williams**, 22, of Philadelphia; and **Tanisha Allen** (AKA Tanisha Smith), 42, of Norristown for operating a gun trafficking organization that illegally obtained and resold fourteen (14) firearms in Montgomery, Berks, Lancaster and Philadelphia counties.

Some of these defendants were previously arrested and charged in February 2021 relating to their involvement in the procurement and trafficking of dozens of illegal firearms obtained through straw purchases—when a person with a clean background fills out paperwork and purchases a firearm on behalf of another person, including convicted felons, domestic violence misdemeanants, juveniles and mentally ill individuals in order to conceal the true ownership of the firearm.

After Daveese Smith's incarceration stemming from the February 2021 charges, the investigative efforts continued, during which Daveese Smith was identified as continuing in his illegal activity. Montgomery County Detectives working in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Gun Violence Task Force

discovered that he had utilized numerous individuals, including his mother Tanisha Allen, to assist in the trafficking of firearms.

Subsequently, law enforcement identified additional illegal purchases orchestrated by Daveese Smith. A review of Daveese Smith's phone contents by law enforcement revealed text messages and images of firearms exchanged between Daveese Smith and other members of this organization.

Further, several recorded telephone calls made by Daveese Smith from the Montgomery County Correctional Facility to his mother, Tanisha Allen, detail negotiations between Allen and customers concerning the purchase of illegal firearms. Tanisha Allen had access to illegally obtained firearms and offered them for sale, following the instructions and pricing established by her son, Daveese Smith, showing that the gun trafficking organization continued to operate after Daveese Smith was incarcerated.

During one call, Tanisha Allen whispers about scratching the numbers off. Firearms are imprinted with serial numbers which are unique identifiers registered to the purchaser. Individuals involved in gun trafficking and other crimes attempt to often obliterate the serial number to conceal the straw purchaser and make the gun nearly impossible to trace.

In the prior investigation, law enforcement identified twenty-nine (29) illegally purchased and distributed firearms. Daveese Smith was charged with his involvement in that corrupt organization and the illegal purchase of twelve firearms. In this investigation, law enforcement has identified an additional fourteen (14) illegal purchases orchestrated by Daveese Smith and his associates, including one firearm that was recovered by law enforcement from a juvenile in Norristown on Friday, July 30, 2021. These gun trafficking organizations both shared the common goal of arming their members and providing the firearms to others, some of whom were precluded from legally obtaining or possessing a firearm or were juveniles.

The Montgomery County Detective Bureau's Violent Crime Unit (VCU), Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General's Gun Violence Task Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bucks and Montgomery County Safe Streets Task Force, Montgomery Township Police Department, Pennsylvania State Police, Norristown Police Department, Pottstown Borough Police Department, Hatfield Township Police Department, Berks County Detectives, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the Plymouth Township Police Department all participated in this investigation.

The defendants were arrested on various criminal charges, but all include felony counts of Corrupt Organizations and Conspiracy. Other charges include Dealing in Proceeds of Unlawful Activities, Unlawful Transfer of a Firearm, Criminal Use of Communications Facilities, Materially False Statements and multiple related offenses.

All five defendants were arraigned before Magisterial Justice Margaret Hunsicker on August 4, 2021.

Bail in this case for Daveese Smith was set at \$250,000 cash. On August 5, 2021, there was a bail review hearing before the Honorable Garrett Page, who kept bail at

\$250,000 cash and added the condition that he have no contact with co-defendants, especially his mother.

Bail for Darell Smith was set at \$10,000 cash with conditions. On August 5, 2021, there was a bail review hearing before the Honorable Judge Garrett Page, who modified bail to \$25,000 unsecured with conditions and pre-trial services monitoring.

Bail for Tanisha Allen was set at \$25,000 unsecured with pre-trial services monitoring.

Bail for Maliqa Jack was set at \$100,000 unsecured with conditions and pre-trial services monitoring.

Bail for Donaya Williams was set at \$100,000 unsecured with conditions and pre-trial services monitoring.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Lauren Marvel, who is Captain of the Pottstown Community Justice Unit, and Assistant District Attorney Samantha Arena of the Firearms Unit.

If anyone has information about additional illegal firearms being bought and/or sold by any of these defendants or has information about any illegal firearms purchases and sales, please call the Montgomery County Detective Bureau's Crime Tip Line at 610-278- DOIT (3648).

Approved for release:



Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES, AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.