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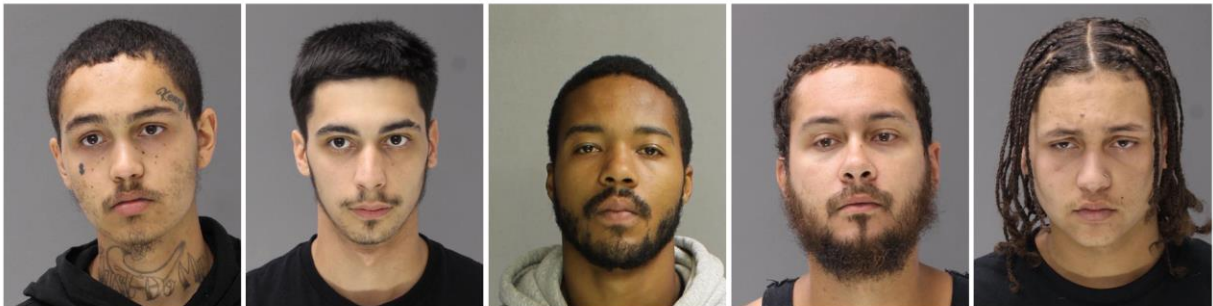
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **GUN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION, HEADED BY 20-YEAR-OLD, OPERATING IN MONTGOMERY AND BUCKS COUNTIES DISMANTLED**

***Six defendants illegally obtained and sold 34 firearms***



Clayton Robinson

Brett Portnor

Maurice Baker

Julian Robinson

Kenneth Robinson

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Nov. 3, 2022) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Bucks County District Attorney Matthew Weintraub and Abington Township Police Chief Patrick Molloy announce the dismantling of a gun trafficking organization that purchased 34 firearms in Montgomery, Bucks and Philadelphia counties and illegally resold them throughout the region. Five men, including the 20-year-old leader, were arrested on charges related to straw purchases of firearms, illegally transferring firearms, operating a corrupt organization and related charges. A sixth man, **Joseph Lynch III**, 25, of Carrollton, Ga., is being sought by law enforcement.

The gun trafficking organization was led by **Clayton Robinson**, 20, with sales help from his brothers **Julian Robinson**, 31, and **Kenneth Robinson**, 18, all of Glenside; along with three men who purchased the firearms: **Maurice Baker IV**, 23, of Bristol, who purchased 12 firearms; **Brett Portner**, 22, of Jenkintown, who purchased five firearms; and **Lynch**, who purchased 17 firearms for the organization.

This gun trafficking investigation began when Clayton Robinson was found to be in possession of an illegal firearm, despite his being just 20 years old at the time. As the joint investigation by Montgomery County Detectives, Bucks County

Detectives and Abington Police looking at Clayton Robinson's activities and contacts led to the three gun purchasers: Baker, Portner and Lynch. Portner and Baker were in communication with Clayton Robinson before, after and sometimes during the illegal gun purchases.

From there, law enforcement began following the multiple purchases of firearms by the three defendants through the Electronic Record of Sale (EROS) system and through hard copies of ATF and Pennsylvania State Police forms at gun stores. Detectives used surveillance, interviews, information from law enforcement agencies, call detail records and cellphone downloads, social media analysis, inspection of forms used in purchasing firearms and other methods of investigation. The investigation found that Lynch purchased 17 firearms for the gun trafficking organization from Nov. 17, 2020 to March 15, 2021; Portner purchased five guns from Jan. 11, 2021 to Feb. 3, 2022; and Baker purchased 12 firearms from May 12, 2021 to Dec. 31, 2021.

These firearms purchases were all "straw purchases," which is when a person with a clean background purchases firearms specifically on behalf of another person to conceal the true ownership of the firearm. Persons who are unable to legally purchase a firearm would include convicted felons, domestic violence misdemeanants, juveniles and mentally ill individuals.

The investigation also found that once the purchased firearm was in Clayton Robinson's possession, he used a power tool to illegally remove each firearm's serial number and text conversations showed that buyers knew this. Other communications between Clayton Robinson and gun purchasers also showed that he was selling "switches," which is slang for kits that convert semiautomatic handguns to fully automatic status, making the firearms even more dangerous.

"These defendants were acting together with the sole purpose of making money by putting firearms in the hands of people who cannot lawfully buy and possess guns, in effect arming criminals and in particular arming criminals with firearms capable of firing many, many bullets in a very short amount of time," said Steele. "Straw purchases and the sale of those guns to people who cannot legally buy their own firearm is dangerous to the safety of all of our communities, especially when the guns have obliterated serial numbers as these guns did. Gun trafficking is a significant threat to public safety and should concern every law-abiding citizen."

"Fighting illegal gun trafficking is our top priority in Bucks," said Weintraub. "We are gaining great ground in this area with the help of great partners like the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office, and many other local, county, state and Federal law enforcement partners. When we work together, all of us are safer. That's how we win."

Of the 34 straw purchases identified through this investigation, only six have been recovered:

Taurus .38 caliber firearm (purchased by Lynch Jan. 15, 2021) and a Glock handgun purchased by Luke DeCristofano Nov. 23, 2020, both recovered April 13, 2022 by Abington Police during Clayton Robinson's arrest:

Ruger 9mm firearm (purchased Jan. 21, 2021 by Lynch), recovered April 16, 2021 by Middletown Township (Pa.) Police during a traffic stop;

Glock 9mm firearm (purchased March 6, 2021 by Lynch), recovered by Yardley Borough Police during a traffic stop on March 21, 2021;

Taurus 9mm firearm (purchased by Baker on July 20, 2021), recovered by Bensalem Township Police during a traffic stop on Sept. 13, 2021;

Canik 9mm semi-automatic firearm (purchased by Portner on Feb. 3, 2022), recovered by Abington Police from juvenile during a traffic stop on March 23, 2022.

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.

Kenneth Robinson was arraigned before Magisterial District Justice Juanita Price. She set bail at \$50,000.00 unsecured.

Clayton Robinson, Maurice Baker and Julian Robinson were arraigned before Magisterial District Justice Jay Friedenbergh who set bail for Clayton Robinson at \$99,000 cash bail; Maurice Baker at \$99,000 cash bail; and Julian Robinson at \$99,077 cash bail.

The preliminary hearing for these defendants is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., December 15, 2022, in front of Magisterial District Justice Juanita Price.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney William Highland of the Firearms Unit.

The investigation also had assistance from the FBI Task Force; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General's Gun Violence Task Force and Liberty Mid-Atlantic HIDTA.

An arrest warrant has been issued for Lynch. If anyone has information about the Lynch's whereabouts, or has information about additional illegal firearms being bought and/or sold by any of these defendants, 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.*