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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHILADELPHIA MAN ARRESTED AFTER PURCHASING, TRAFFICKING 36 FIREARMS IN EIGHT COUNTIES IN 77 DAYS



DANIEL LUCAS

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Nov. 10, 2020) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele today announced the arrest of Daniel Lucas, 21, of Philadelphia, on multiple felony charges related to the purchasing and trafficking of 36 firearms in eight counties in less than three months. The defendant also attempted to purchase three additional firearms but was denied.

The investigation by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau's Violent Crimes Unit (VCU) and multiple federal, state and local partners began on Sept. 8, 2020, when county detectives were reviewing paperwork, as is their routine, related to multiple gun purchases by individuals. They noted that Lucas was purchasing an alarming number of firearms in a short period of time, including multiple guns of the exact same type, both of which are indicative of "straw purchases" of firearms. A "straw purchase" 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.

VCU detectives continued the investigation of Lucas' firearms purchases using the Electronic Record of Sale (EROS) system and by going through hard copies of ATF and Pennsylvania State Police forms at gun stores. The investigation found that from July 7 to Sept. 28, 2020, Lucas purchased 36 firearms from gun shops in eight counties. The counties and number of gun purchases were Lancaster (13), Bucks (9), Chester (5), Montgomery (4), Delaware (2), Berks (1), Philadelphia (1) and Schuylkill (1) counties. The defendant also attempted to purchase three additional firearms, one each in Bucks, Chester and Montgomery counties.

Additionally, the investigation found that on more than one occasion, the defendant visited more than one gun store in a day; bought multiple firearms at the same time, including multiple purchases of the same make and model of gun; and traveled great distances to procure firearms. An analysis of Lucas' trips to purchase firearms found that the total estimated travel distance he covered to purchase these 36 firearms and attempt to purchase three others was a staggering 1,724 miles, with the longest trips each being nearly 200 miles round trip.

Of the 36 firearms purchased by Lucas, one firearm has been recovered. On Oct. 19, 2020, a Smith & Wesson semi-automatic handgun was seized by Philadelphia police officers during a traffic incident that involved two males under the age to purchase or own a gun. Lucas had not reported that firearm, which he purchased on Aug. 2, 2020, or any of the 36 firearms he purchased as lost or stolen. At the time of his arrest, Lucas was not in possession of any firearms.

"In 77 days, this defendant was buying and selling as many firearms as he could and traveling great distances from his Philadelphia residence to multiple gun dealers in multiple counties to do it—and then reselling the guns to people who cannot legally buy firearms for themselves. There are laws about who can and can't buy guns and those laws are in place to protect us all. Purchasing guns and illegally selling them makes us all less safe," said Steele. "Straw purchasers like Lucas need to be stopped and we need to have stronger tracking and reporting mechanisms in place to be able to flag this type of behavior before we have 36 firearms on the street."

Montgomery County Detectives worked this investigation with the FBI's Bucks and Montgomery County Safe Streets Task Force; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Pennsylvania State Police; Office of the Attorney General's Gun Violence Task Force, Philadelphia Police Department, West Chester University Police Department, Bensalem Police Department and Warminster Township Police Department.

Lucas was charged with multiple felony counts of Corrupt Organizations, Dealing in Proceeds of Unlawful Activities, Unlawful Transfer of a Firearm, Criminal Use of Communications Facilities, Materially False Statements and multiple related offenses. He was arraigned on Nov. 9, 2020 before Magisterial District Judge William I. Maruszczak, who set bail at \$1 million cash. The defendant was unable to make bail and was remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for 3:30 p.m., Nov. 23, 2020 before Judge Maruszczak.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Scott Frame.

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.