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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **DA, ATF ANNOUNCE DISMANTLING OF GUN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION OPERATING IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

***An adult and a then-17-year-old illegally obtained and sold 69 firearms***



**TYRONE DANSBY**



**QUAMIR TERRY-JOHNSON**

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Nov. 15, 2021) — Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele and Matthew P. Varisco, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Department of Justice, Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) Philadelphia Field Division, announce arrests related to the illegal buying and selling of 69 firearms in Montgomery, Philadelphia, Bucks and Lehigh Counties during six and one-half months in 2020. Arrested for running the gun trafficking organization were Tyrone Dansby, 24, of Philadelphia, and an 18-year-old charged for juvenile conduct, who is also from Philadelphia. Quamir Terry-Johnson, 22, of Philadelphia, is charged with felony firearms charges after buying two of the 69 guns originally purchased by Dansby.

The investigation into the gun trafficking organization began in September 2020 when the ATF was alerted to a suspicious sale involving both Dansby and the juvenile, J.W. Later, the Montgomery County Detective Bureau Violent Crime Unit joined the ATF's investigation, and together detectives and ATF agents scoured electronic records and paper records at gun stores throughout the Southeastern Pennsylvania region. The investigation found that from March 8 through Sept. 29, 2020, Dansby bought 69 firearms from firearms stores in Montgomery, Bucks, Lehigh and Philadelphia counties. One illegal purchasing spree by Dansby in June 2020 yielded 28 handguns

from nine different stores. Oftentimes, Dansby would visit more than one gun store in a day and buy multiple firearms at the same time, including multiple purchases of the same make and model of gun. (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.)

Once Dansby purchased the firearms, a piece of equipment recovered by law enforcement through a search warrant, was used to obliterate the serial numbers, attempting to render the firearm untraceable. They were then immediately made available for sale by J.W., typically using his Instagram account and other social media accounts.

The partner investigation by ATF and Montgomery County Detectives, which is continuing, was assisted by the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General’s Gun Violence Task Force, Philadelphia Police Department, Philadelphia Juvenile Probation/Philadelphia Police Department Juvenile Enforcement Team, the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Bucks and Montgomery County Safe Streets Task Force, Tennessee Highway Patrol, Reading Police Department, Morton Borough (PA) Police Department and the Pennsylvania State Police. The investigation used surveillance, cellphone analysis, review of federal firearms forms and EROS, social media analysis, search warrants, interviews and other methods of investigation to uncover the participants of the gun trafficking organization and their illegal activities surrounding the straw purchases of the 69 firearms.

Of the 69 firearms that have been found to be straw purchases for the organization, 33 were purchased in Bucks County, 17 in Philadelphia, 16 in Montgomery County and three in Lehigh County. Three firearms straw purchased by Dansby have been recovered by law enforcement:

- On Dec. 30, 2020, Reading City Police were investigating a shooting and recovered a Taurus G2C semi-automatic 9mm pistol with an obliterated serial number from defendant Quamir Terry-Johnson of Philadelphia, who was shot in the arm. Law enforcement was able to restore the serial number, which identified the gun as having been purchased by Dansby on May 13, 2020.
- Another Taurus G2C semi-automatic 9mm pistol, also purchased on May 13, 2020 by Dansby, was recovered from defendant Terry-Johnson by Exeter Township Police on March 23, 2021 during a traffic stop. The loaded firearm also had an obliterated serial number, which law enforcement was able to recover.
- On June 2, 2020, Morton Borough Police arrested an individual and recovered a Taurus, Model G3, 9mm, semi-automatic handgun that also had an obliterated serial number that was able to be recovered by law enforcement. That gun was purchased by Dansby less than two weeks earlier on May 20, 2020.

“This type of organization’s sole purpose is to make money by putting firearms in the hands of criminals who cannot lawfully buy and possess guns. Illegal firearms on our streets are a significant threat to public safety and should concern every law-abiding

citizen,” said DA Steele. “Law enforcement at the local, county, state and federal levels are working together to fight the arming of criminals through these illegal straw purchases and gun trafficking. We are all committed partners in this fight to keep our communities safe.”

“Straw purchasers and firearm traffickers enable violence by putting guns in the hands of dangerous individuals who cannot legally possess them,” said Varisco. “ATF stands united with our local, county, state and, federal partners in investigating violent gun crimes and straw purchasing schemes like this. I would like to thank the Montgomery County District Attorney’s Office for their dedicated work in prosecuting this case.”

Tyrone Dansby has been in a federal detention facility since being arrested on May 21, 2021 for lying to federal officials related to firearms purchases as well as other charges. He was arraigned on Nov. 12, 2021 on new charges of felony counts of Corrupt Organizations, Conspiracy, Dealing in Proceeds of Unlawful Activities, Unlawful Transfer of a Firearm, Criminal Use of Communications Facilities, Corruption of Minors, Materially False Statements and multiple related offenses. Magisterial District Judge Suzan Leonard set bail at \$500,000 cash. Dansby was then returned to the federal detention facility. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for Dansby on 11:45 a.m., Dec. 2, 2021 before Magisterial District Judge Harry J. Nesbitt III.

A Juvenile Petition concerning J.W.’s conduct when he was 17 years old was filed today in Juvenile Court, and he was arrested. Due to the severity of the conduct, the District Attorney’s Office will seek to certify J.W. and have his charges moved from Juvenile Court to the Court of Common Pleas.

Terry-Johnson was charged with Unlawful Sale/Transfer of a Firearm, Corrupt Organizations, Conspiracy, Altering/Obliterating Marks of Identification, Dealing in the Proceeds of Unlawful Activities, Criminal Use of a Communications Facility, Materially False Statements and related charges. He is currently in custody on unrelated charges in Delaware and is awaiting extradition.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Samantha Arena and Allison Ruth, the Captain of the Firearms Unit.

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.*