



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

KEVIN R. STEELE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY
COURTHOUSE
P.O. BOX 311
NORRISTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
19404-0311

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S FAX
COUNTY DETECTIVE BUREAU

(610) 278-3090
(610) 278-3095
(610) 278-3368

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT: Kate Delano 610-278-3148

MICHAEL HILL OF LOWER POTTS GROVE AND SIX OTHERS CHARGED WITH OPERATING GUN TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION



Michael Hill



Corey DeJohnette



Phillippe DeJohnette



Andrew Person



Chad Hill



Anthony Walker

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (Feb. 3, 2107)—Montgomery County District Attorney Kevin R. Steele, Lower Pottsgrove Police Chief Michael Foltz, West Pottsgrove Police Chief Matthew Stofflet, Pottstown Police Chief F. Richard Drumheller and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Special Agent in Charge Sam Rabadi announce the arrests of six men and the charging of one woman for operating a corrupt organization that was trafficking illegal firearms.

The leader of the group was Michael Hill, 30, of Lower Pottsgrove, who was charged with Corrupt Organizations, Dealing in Proceeds of Unlawful Activities, Unlawful Transfer of a Firearm, Unsworn Falsification, Person not to Possess Firearms, Criminal Use of Communications Facilities and related offenses. Also arrested were Corey DeJohnette, 23, of Pottstown; Phillipe DeJohnette, 24, of Stowe; Andrew Person, 30, of Reading; Chad Hill, 18, of Birdsboro; and Anthony Walker, 28, of Philadelphia. Jennifer Bender, 28, of Pottstown, was charged and a warrant for her arrest has been issued. Each defendant was charged with Corrupt Organizations, Unlawful Transfer of a Firearm, Criminal Use of Communications Facilities, Unsworn Falsification and related offenses.

The lengthy investigation by the Montgomery County Detective Bureau's Violent Crimes Unit, the ATF, and three police departments revealed that Michael Hill had created and operated a network of individuals who worked on his behalf to purchase guns for sale to another person, also called "straw purchases." Michael Hill conspired with these members of the "Michael Hill Gun Trafficking Organization" to purchase illegal firearms, make materially false statements on the Application/Record of Sale, and recruit others to assist in this corrupt organization. Michael Hill was also involved in trafficking illegal pills, heroin and Methamphetamine. During the course of the investigation, 13 firearms, including multiple handguns, semi-automatic weapons and a long rifle, were directly connected to the members of the organization as guns that were in their possession, purchased by them, attempted to be purchased by them or were distributed by their group.

"The investigation into this corrupt organization was initiated by several astute law enforcement personnel connecting the dots on two guns used in two separate crimes by persons not legally allowed to have a gun," Steele said. "We successfully seized a number of weapons in the search of Michael Hill's residence, and even more importantly, with the defendant's arrest we have stopped a supplier of illegal guns. Our entire region is safer for it."

ATF's Rabadi echoed DA Steele saying, "Straw purchasers start the cycle of violence by putting firearms into the hands of criminals. Anyone who illegally purchases, illegally transfers or illegally possesses a gun threatens the safety of our communities. ATF will continue to work together with the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office to prevent the diversion of guns and reduce gun crime in our neighborhoods."

Arrested and arraigned today before Magisterial District Judge Edward C. Kropp, Sr., and their bail amounts were: Michael Hill, Phillipe DeJohnette, Corey DeJohnette and Anthony Walker \$500,000 each; Chad Hill and Andrew Person \$100,000 each; all of whom failed to make bail and were remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility. Their preliminary hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m., March 3, 2017 before Judge Kropp.

The case will be prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Brianna Ringwood, captain of the Community Prosecution Unit, and Assistant District Attorney Robert Kolansky.

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.