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NEWS RELEASE

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23 Defendants Facing Charges for Burglarizing Multiple Marijuana Dispensaries

DENVER— Denver District Attorney Beth McCann announced today that, as the result of two comprehensive law enforcement investigations, 23 members of two separate organized crime groups will be charged with stealing or carjacking vehicles and using them to burglarize marijuana dispensaries, federal firearms licensees and other businesses in the Denver metro area between September 2022 and November 2023.

The defendants allegedly burglarized more than 40 marijuana dispensaries. These crimes resulted in the theft of approximately \$780,000 in cash and property. In addition to motor vehicle theft and burglary, the defendants will face numerous other charges, including aggravated robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, illegal possession of firearms (including a firearm linked to an open murder investigation), and violations of the Colorado Organized Crime Control Act (COCCA).

The arrests were the result of lengthy, multi-agency investigations conducted by the Denver District Attorney's Office, Denver Police Department, Aurora Police Department, FBI, ATF, the Regional Anti-Violence Enforcement Network (R.A.V.E.N.), and the Violent Criminal Enterprise Task Force (V.C.E.T.F.).

"These arrests send an unmistakable message that law enforcement agencies throughout the Denver metro area are committed to working together to disrupt and disband dangerous criminal organizations. The streets of Denver are safer today because of these two investigations and I am grateful to the many law enforcement officers who have worked so hard on these cases to get us to this point," said DA McCann.

“The Denver Police Department has committed significant resources to V.C.E.T.F., an investigative taskforce consisting of both FBI and Denver investigators responsible for dismantling criminal groups driving violence in the Denver metro area,” said Denver Police Chief Ron Thomas. “The taskforce’s investigation is an incredible example of the unwavering commitment to the safety of our community by identifying individuals responsible for violent crime, to include multiple aggravated robberies, kidnapping, carjackings, and burglaries of dispensaries and small businesses, and they will continue working to hold accountable those causing significant harm in our community.”

“This operation is another prime example of the phenomenal crime fighting RAVEN and the participating agencies at the federal, state, county and municipal levels are doing to make our region safer,” said Aurora Police Chief Art Acevedo. “The operations resulted in the arrests of more than 20 criminals responsible for many acts of violence and flooding our communities with weapons, dangerous drugs and illegal, fully-automatic conversion devices, including Glock switches and auto sears. The outstanding work of our RAVEN partners not only makes our city, region and state safer, but should also serve as a message that we will not tolerate violent crime. We steadfastly stand united with our partners in our pledge to investigate, disrupt and dismantle violent crime organizations wherever they exist in our communities.”

“Criminal networks don’t pay attention to geographic or jurisdictional boundaries. The FBI warrants were executed by our local partners at Denver Police, Aurora Police and Thornton Police, with support by our federal partners at Homeland Security Investigations and our state partners at the Marijuana Enforcement Division,” said FBI Denver Special Agent in Charge Mark Michalek. “The FBI will continue to use all available tools and resources to suppress violent crime and keep Coloradans safe.”

“RAVEN is a locally unified task force that exemplifies ATF’s commitment to relentlessly target violent criminals and their organizations,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Brent Beavers. “We are once again grateful for the Denver District Attorney’s Office and their team of prosecutors who have always stood ready for the task of prosecuting violent offenders.”

ABOUT THE DENVER DA’S OFFICE:

Our mission is to professionally and competently prosecute crimes and investigate criminal activity on behalf of the people of Colorado, and to seek equal justice for all in the criminal justice system. Our mission also includes preventing crime, supporting the well-being of victims, being involved in the community, being transparent and accountable, and improving the criminal justice system to provide fair alternatives to incarceration in appropriate cases.

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