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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fentanyl and Firearms Trafficker Sentenced to Fifteen Years in Federal Prison

Richard G. Frohling, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, announced that on April 11, 2025, Azjuan Meriwether (age: 25) of Milwaukee, was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for drug and firearm offenses.

According to court records, a proactive law enforcement investigation revealed that Meriwether was the leader of an armed drug trafficking organization responsible for distributing at least 32 kilograms of fentanyl, at least 375 grams of para-fluorofentanyl (a fentanyl analogue), as well as methamphetamine, cocaine, and other drugs. Meriwether and his organization also engaged in firearms trafficking involving the illegal sale of firearms, machinegun-conversion devices, also known as "switches," and "ghost guns." "Ghost guns" are privately made firearms, often assembled from pre-made kits, that do not possess serial numbers or other identifying markings, which make the firearms difficult to trace back to the original purchaser and manufacturer. As part of his plea agreement, Meriwether agreed that he personally and illegally sold 18 firearms and 6 "switches." Below is a photograph from the court record of firearms recovered as a result of this investigation.



As a result of the investigation, Meriwether was arrested in Indiana. Before his arrest, Meriwether led officers on a high-speed chase that lasted approximately 2 hours and involved Meriwether driving his vehicle the wrong way on a highway, endangering civilians and officers. Law enforcement ultimately recovered approximately 375 grams of para-fluorofentanyl combined with heroin, approximately 165 grams of methamphetamine, and approximately 29 grams of cocaine from Meriwether's vehicle.

"The conduct at issue in this case presented layer upon layer of danger to the community," said Acting U.S. Attorney Frohling. "This individual and his organization not only distributed dangerous – potentially lethal -- controlled substances but also further endangered others through the sale of switches and ghost guns. The sentence imposed in this case is the direct result of strong partnerships among federal and local agencies, supported by the North Central High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA). I commend the agents, task force officers, and support personnel who worked tirelessly to build this investigation and hold Mr. Meriwether accountable for his actions."

"Meriwether's possession and sale of fentanyl and Machine Gun Conversion Devices posed a dual threat to our communities," stated Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF) Chicago Field Division Special Agent-in-Charge Christopher Amon. "Through the use of NIBIN and collaborations like those seen in the Waukesha County Drug Task Force, law enforcement was able to link firearms possessed by Meriwether to violent acts.

Taking him off the streets helps stop the flow of drugs and Machine Gun Conversion Devices into our communities, which reduces crime, protects residents, and fosters safer neighborhoods.”

“The DEA and their partners from the Waukesha County Sheriff’s Department continue to relentlessly pursue dangerous fentanyl traffickers like Meriwether. The DEA is grateful to the Waukesha County Sheriff’s Department for their unwavering commitment to dismantle violent drug-trafficking organizations and keep our communities safe,” said U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Milwaukee District Office Assistant Special Agent in Charge John G. McGarry.

“This investigation originated in a small Waukesha County community and through the hard work of our local Drug Task Force, and their partnership with federal law enforcement agencies, a criminal organization was dismantled. These law enforcement relationships are paramount to effectively maintaining safety in our communities,” said Captain Tony Kasta, Waukesha County Drug Task Force.

This prosecution was part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) investigation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level drug traffickers, money launderers, gangs, and transnational criminal organizations that threaten the United States by using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach that leverages the strengths of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies against criminal networks.

This matter was investigated by ATF, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Waukesha County Drug Task Force, through a coordinated partnership supported by the North Central HIDTA.

In addition to the investigating agencies noted above, multiple law enforcement agencies participated in arrests, the execution of search warrants, and other matters related to the case, including the United States Marshals Service (USMS), the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation (WI DOJ-DCI), the Waukesha County Sheriff’s Department, the Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Department, the Washington County Sheriff’s Department, the Milwaukee Police Department, the West Allis Police Department, as well as the Indiana State Patrol, Vermillion County (Indiana) Sheriff’s Office, and the Vermillion County District Attorney’s Office.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Katherine Halopka-Ivery and Patricia Daugherty.

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