



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03/27/09

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan/>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

CLIFFORD HARRIS (“T.I.”) SENTENCED TO PRISON ON FEDERAL FIREARMS CHARGES

Results of Defendant’s Extensive and Unique Community Service Program Also Presented at Sentencing Hearing

Atlanta, GA - CLIFFORD J. HARRIS, JR., a/k/a “T.I.,” 27, of College Park, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell, Jr. on charges of unlawfully possessing machine guns and silencers and possession of firearms by a convicted felon.

HARRIS was sentenced to serve one year and one day in prison, followed by three years of supervised release. He was also sentenced to serve 365 days of home confinement and 1,500 hours of community service, with credit for approximately 305 days of home confinement and 1,030 hours of community service that he completed before sentencing. In addition, HARRIS was ordered to pay a fine of \$100,000. HARRIS has agreed to forfeit all of the firearms and ammunition involved in the offenses and to waive appeal.

“We are very pleased with the result in this case,” said David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia. “Mr. Harris has received a significant penalty for the serious firearms offenses he committed, including spending the next year in federal prison, a year in home confinement, and three years on supervised release. His prison sentence was reduced from what it might have been, but the public got something very significant in exchange: the extensive and unique community service program that Mr. Harris committed to doing when he pleaded guilty. By all accounts, his community service has been a remarkable success – it certainly exceeded our expectations – and there is still more to come when he gets out of prison.”

Mr. Nahmias continued, “Preventing crime is a critically important law enforcement objective. Many of us spend considerable time trying to reach young people and teach them about the importance of leading law-abiding and productive lives -- but we have real trouble connecting with the kids most at risk. For the past year, Mr. Harris has used his high public visibility, his exceptional communication skills, and his real-

world life experience to deliver the right message to literally thousands of kids. He has told them about the mistakes he has made and educated them about the dangers of violence, guns, gangs, and drugs. Young people have wanted to hear from ‘T.I.,’ and we are confident that at least some of those kids will lead better and more law-abiding lives as a result. That is a very positive result for our communities, and it merits a sentence reduction for Mr. Harris, just as we routinely reduce sentences for defendants whose assistance leads to another conviction.”

“I hope that young people are paying close attention to this case and realize that no one who commits gun offenses is immune from investigation, prosecution and possible prison time,” said Special Agent in Charge Gregory Gant of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. “Those who commit such crimes can, and will, face very real consequences for their actions. Every day, ATF agents work aggressively to prevent and address violent crime and the criminal misuse of firearms in our communities. The last place that machine guns and silencers should be is in the hands of a convicted felon.”

HARRIS pleaded guilty to the charges on March 27, 2008. His sentencing was deferred for one year pursuant to his binding plea agreement, for the purpose of allowing him to perform the extensive community service program that he proposed. That program was designed to promote respect for the law and law enforcement, oppose violence, illegal and reckless use of firearms, illegal drugs, and gang activity, and focus on at-risk young people and educating them about the mistakes HARRIS has made. During the deferral period, HARRIS remained under strict bond conditions, including but not limited to constant supervision by a court-approved monitor; wearing a GPS location monitor; consenting to random, unannounced searches; traveling only for pre-approved work and community service; abiding by a curfew when at home and when traveling; having all visitors identified, listed, and searched; refraining from the use of alcohol and illegal drugs and testing for the same; and maintaining a \$ 3 million cash bond.

At the sentencing hearing, the Court found that HARRIS had fully complied with the conditions of his plea agreement and bond. More information about the community service that HARRIS has performed is available in the Sentencing Memorandum filed by his counsel, which is available upon request.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court, including the Stipulated Statement of Facts underlying the guilty plea: In 1998, HARRIS was convicted of possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute in Cobb County, Georgia. Thereafter, as a convicted felon, he could not lawfully buy, receive, or possess firearms or ammunition of any kind. During September and October 2007, one of HARRIS’ bodyguards purchased nine firearms for HARRIS at his request. The bodyguard delivered these firearms to HARRIS at his residence in College Park, Georgia. HARRIS took possession of the firearms and placed some or all of them in a hidden

compartment inside a closet in his bedroom.

On October 10, 2007, HARRIS arranged for the same bodyguard to pick up \$12,000 in cash from HARRIS' bank. HARRIS told the bodyguard to use the cash to buy machine guns for him. Later that day, the bodyguard was arrested by ATF agents after he purchased three machine guns for HARRIS, and also bought two silencers to deliver to HARRIS, from an undercover ATF agent. The machine guns and silencers were not registered to the bodyguard or to HARRIS in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record, as would be required for a lawful purchase of machine guns or silencers.

After his arrest, the bodyguard agreed to assist the ATF. He advised the ATF agents that the machine guns were being purchased for HARRIS and disclosed his previous firearms purchases for HARRIS. This was the first the agents knew of HARRIS' involvement. The bodyguard made several monitored/recorded telephone calls to HARRIS, during which the two discussed delivery of the weapons. HARRIS said he wanted to take possession of the "items" or "product" (meaning the machine guns), and HARRIS and the bodyguard agreed to meet in the parking lot of a Publix shopping center in midtown Atlanta. The meeting was arranged for the afternoon of Saturday, October 13, 2007. HARRIS arrived at the shopping center driving a Range Rover sport utility vehicle, with a female and a male passenger inside. The bodyguard got into the back seat of the Range Rover and showed HARRIS the machine guns and silencers, which the bodyguard had carried to the meeting in a duffel-type bag. HARRIS asked the bodyguard, "Is there anything special I need to know?" HARRIS and the bodyguard then discussed the semi-automatic and fully-automatic functioning of the machine guns. HARRIS inspected the weapons and noted that the silencers were designed for "no flash, no bang." HARRIS also asked the bodyguard whether ammunition was included for the machine guns and asked what caliber rounds were used in the weapons.

ATF agents then moved in and arrested HARRIS. During a subsequent search of the Range Rover vehicle, ATF agents found a loaded .40 caliber pistol tucked between the driver's seat, where HARRIS had been sitting, and the center console. This firearm had been purchased by the bodyguard on September 6, 2007, and HARRIS knew it was in his vehicle. ATF agents also found a loaded .45 caliber pistol in the back passenger seat and another loaded .45 caliber pistol in a piece of luggage in the rear storage area that also contained HARRIS' clothing and personal items; the latter pistol had been purchased by the bodyguard for HARRIS and delivered to his residence on September 26, 2007. Following his arrest, HARRIS waived his Miranda rights, was interviewed by ATF agents, and admitted that he handled the machine guns in the vehicle.

Later that same day, October 13, 2007, ATF agents, accompanied by Deputy U.S. Marshals, Fulton County Police Officers, and Fulton County Sheriff's Deputies, executed a federal search warrant at HARRIS' residence in College Park. During the search, the agents found two rifles and a pistol, with magazines and ammunition, all of which had

been purchased for HARRIS by the bodyguard, inside HARRIS' bedroom closet. The agents also found two more pistols and one revolver, along with pistol boxes and ammunition, some of which had been purchased for HARRIS by the bodyguard, inside a compartment behind a false wall within his bedroom closet, which was secured with a biometric lock that required HARRIS' fingerprint to open and had last been opened by HARRIS the previous day. The agents also found additional ammunition and firearms boxes in HARRIS' bedroom.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

Assistant United States Attorneys Todd Alley and Francey Hakes prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.