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**FOUR DRUG GANG MEMBERS CONVICTED OF RACKETEERING CONSPIRACY
ENCOMPASSING FIVE MURDERS AND DRUG TRAFFICKING**

Drug Operations Promoted Rap Music Business

Baltimore, Maryland - Following a nine week trial, a federal jury today convicted four defendants of racketeering conspiracy under the RICO statute, encompassing five murders committed in 2002 in Baltimore and Randallstown, narcotics trafficking, and other offenses, announced United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein.

“Four more of Baltimore’s most violent criminals will be off the streets for a long time thanks to this case,” said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein. “Racketeering prosecutions are time-consuming, but they are making a difference.”

According to evidence presented at trial, Willie Edward Mitchell, a/k/a Bo, age 31, of Baltimore, Maryland; Shelton Lee Harris, a/k/a Rock, Little Rock, Hard Rock, age 25, of Baltimore, Maryland; Shelly Wayne Martin a/k/a Wayne, Weaze, Weazy, age 32, of Randallstown, Maryland; and Shawn Earl Gardner, a/k/a Goo, age 31, of Baltimore, Maryland, were members of a violent criminal organization which operated in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. From 1996 to August 2006, the defendants conspired to commit murder, armed robbery and home-invasion robbery in furtherance of the racketeering enterprise.

Mitchell and Harris were convicted of the double homicide of Oliver McCaffity and Lisa Brown on the night of February 27-28, 2002 in the Finney Avenue area of Baltimore City and of the double homicide and armed robbery of Darryl Wyche and Anthony Wyche on the night of March 24-25, 2002 in the Wabash Avenue area of Baltimore City. In both of these double murders, the victims were shot to death while they sat in the front seat of automobiles. Shawn Gardner was convicted of the murder and armed robbery of Tanya Jones-Spence on June 7, 2002 in Randallstown.

Trial evidence showed that these crimes, as well as armed robberies and narcotics trafficking offenses involving crack cocaine, cocaine, marijuana and heroin, were carried out from 1994 to August 2006 in furtherance of the racketeering enterprise. Also part of the racketeering enterprise was a company called Shake Down Entertainment, Ltd., incorporated in December 2000 with Mitchell as its resident agent. Shake Down Entertainment produced and

promoted rap music recordings. One of the purposes of the criminal enterprise was to promote rap music recordings and performances.

Another purpose of the criminal enterprise was to prevent and obstruct the arrest and prosecution of gang members through witness intimidation and disruption of court proceedings. Specifically, Harris wrote rap music lyrics which included threats to cooperating witnesses and discussed the facts of some of the murders. Harris also assaulted a person in jail whom he believed was a cooperating witness in the case.

All of the defendants face maximum sentences of life in prison for the racketeering charge and conspiracy to distribute narcotics. Defendants Mitchell, Harris and Gardner face mandatory life sentences for the murders. Harris also faces a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison for witness retaliation.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the Baltimore City Police Department, the Baltimore County Police Department, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, U.S. Marshal's Service, Maryland State Police and several Pennsylvania state law enforcement agencies for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant United States Attorneys Robert R. Harding and Michael C. Hanlon, who are prosecuting the case.