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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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FIVE INDICTED ON FEDERAL ARSON CHARGES AND WITNESS TAMPERING

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Allen F. Loucks, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today a federal grand jury indicted the following five defendants, all of Baltimore, Maryland, on charges of witness tampering, conspiracy to commit witness tampering, use of firearms in a crime of violence, use of fire and explosives in a felony and making firearms, in connection with the January 15, 2005 arson of a residence located in Baltimore, Maryland:

Nakie Harris, age 29;
Jackie Brewington, age 18;
Andre Wilkins, age 31;
Isaac Smith, age 25 ; and
Richard Royal, age 20.

The six count indictment alleges that on January 15, 2005 the defendants conspired to attempt to kill a person with the intent to prevent the communication by such person to a federal law enforcement officer of information relating to the commission and possible commission of drug trafficking, a federal offense. It was further part of the alleged conspiracy that the defendants purchased gasoline and beer bottles and made "Molotov Cocktails." The defendants allegedly threw

the “Molotov Cocktails” at a Baltimore residence and used a getaway car to escape.

Each of the defendants face a maximum penalty of: 20 years in prison for each of counts 1 and 2 which charge conspiracy to commit witness tampering and witness tampering by attempted murder; 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine under count 3 which charges witness tampering by use of physical force; a mandatory minimum of 30 years in prison and up to life in prison plus a \$250,000 fine under Count 4 which charges witness tampering by use of a Molotov cocktail; a minimum mandatory 10 years consecutive to any other count of conviction and a \$250,000 fine under Count 5 which charges use of fire or an explosive in the commission of witness tampering; and 10 years and a \$250,000 fine under Count 6 for making a Molotov cocktail.

United States Attorney Allen Loucks stated that “Witness intimidation is a serious offense which threatens the integrity of our criminal justice system. We are using all available resources to combat this long-standing problem in Baltimore, including seeking the stiffest penalties possible.”

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of an investigation coordinated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Baltimore City Fire Department, Baltimore City Police Department, and the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys A. David Copperthite and Kwame J. Manley.