



Department of Justice

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias
Northern District of Georgia

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CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

ENTERTAINER CLIFFORD HARRIS, a/k/a "T.I.,"
PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL FIREARMS CHARGES

***Sentencing Deferred One Year to Allow Harris to Perform Unique and
Extensive Community Service, After Which He Will Serve Prison Sentence***

Atlanta, GA - CLIFFORD J. HARRIS, JR., an entertainer also known as "T.I.," 27, of College Park, Georgia, pleaded guilty today in federal district court to possession of unregistered machine guns and silencers, unlawful possession of machine guns, and possession of firearms by a convicted felon. Today's plea includes his admission that he also illegally possessed eight firearms found in his vehicle and home.

"Mr. Harris has now admitted that he is guilty of the serious federal firearms offenses with which he was charged," said David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia. "The next step is to determine the appropriate sentence. He has asked, and we and the Court have agreed, that his sentencing be deferred for a year to allow him to perform a unique and extensive program – at least 1000 hours – of community service. That service will focus on using his high public visibility and his talents and life experience to tell at-risk young people about the mistakes he has made and to educate them about the dangers of violence, guns, gangs, and drugs. If Mr. Harris performs as expected, his efforts and ability to reach and influence a large number of young people should prevent and deter at least some of them from committing crimes that endanger their communities and ruin their lives. Preventing crime is an important law enforcement objective, one that we expend considerable time and resources trying to promote -- and one that if accomplished by a defendant merits a sentence reduction just as we commonly reduce sentences for defendants whose assistance leads to another conviction."

"Mr. Harris will remain under strict bond conditions during the next year," Mr. Nahmias continued. "If he performs his community service as expected and lives up to the many other obligations of his bond and plea agreement, then he will still receive a substantial sentence for his crimes: a year in prison, three years of supervised release including a year of home detention, a total of 1500 hours of community service, and a \$100,000 fine. If he does not fulfill his obligations, then he will remain bound by his

guilty plea, but he will face a much longer prison sentence. In short, this resolution is in the public interest and consistent with the principles of federal prosecution and sentencing.”

“It is disturbing to witness self-destructive behavior first hand,” said ATF Acting Special Agent in Charge Scott Sweetow. “This previously convicted felon well knew that he could not possess any firearms, let alone machineguns and silencers, yet he chose to break the law. When people violate federal firearms laws, they should not be surprised to find ATF agents at their door. We are gratified that this case was efficiently resolved and are pleased to see the defendant take responsibility for his criminal conduct.”

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court, including the Stipulated Statement of Facts: In 1998, HARRIS was convicted of possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute in Cobb County, Georgia. As a convicted felon, he could not lawfully buy, receive, or possess firearms or ammunition of any kind. During September and October of 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, and they then followed the evidence. 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.

On October 17, 2007, a federal grand jury indicted HARRIS on charges of possession of the three unregistered machine guns and two unregistered silencers; unlawful possession of the machine guns; and possession of the machine guns and silencers by a convicted felon. He pleaded guilty today to a Superseding Criminal Information that added eight additional firearms found in his vehicle and residence to the charge of possession of firearms by a convicted felon.

The plea agreement provides for HARRIS’ sentencing to be deferred for 12 months, so long as HARRIS remains in compliance, for the purpose of allowing him to perform the extensive community service that he has proposed, which is 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 he has made. During the 12-month sentencing deferral, HARRIS must perform at least 1000 hours of the community service; may not violate any federal, state, or local law; and will remain under strict bond conditions. The

bond conditions include, but are 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 the \$ 3 million cash bond posted by HARRIS and his record company.

At sentencing, if the Court finds that HARRIS has fulfilled all of his obligations, then he will receive a sentence of one year and one day in prison, followed by supervised release for three years, including 365 days of home detention (with credit for days served on home incarceration and detention prior to sentencing) and 1500 hours of community service (with credit for service performed prior to sentencing), and a \$100,000 fine. If at sentencing the Court finds that HARRIS has not fulfilled all of his obligations, then he will still be bound by his guilty plea but will receive a substantially longer prison sentence in addition to the other sentence components. HARRIS also has agreed to forfeit all of the firearms and ammunition and to waive appeal.

Sentencing is scheduled for March 27, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., before United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell, Jr.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the ATF.

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

NEWS MEDIA NOTE: Copies of the Superseding Criminal Information, Plea Agreement, Stipulated Statement of Facts, and Modified Bond Order are available upon request.

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.