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**TTP BLOODS MEMBER SENTENCED TO OVER 12 YEARS IN PRISON FOR
RACKETEERING ACTIVITIES**

*Defendant Stabbed and Shot a Man Who was Later Murdered by other TTP Members for
Testifying About the Stabbing and Shooting*

Baltimore, Maryland -U.S. District Judge William D. Quarles, Jr. sentenced Antwoine Gross, age 23, of Essex, Maryland, today to 151 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release, for conspiracy to conduct and participate in the activities of a racketeering enterprise known as the Tree Top Piru Bloods (TTP Bloods).

The sentence was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia C. Jessamy; Special Agent in Charge Theresa R. Stoop of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives - Baltimore Field Division; Special Agent in Charge Ava Cooper-Davis of the Drug Enforcement Administration - Washington Field Division; Special Agent in Charge Richard A. McFeely of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Baltimore Police Commissioner Frederick H. Bealefeld III; Chief James W. Johnson of the Baltimore County Police Department; Wicomico County State's Attorney Davis Ruark; Wicomico County Sheriff Mike Lewis; the Washington County Narcotics Task Force led by Washington County Sheriff Douglas Mullendore; Anne Arundel County Police Chief James Teare, Sr.; Acting Salisbury Police Chief Ivan E. Barkley; and Hagerstown Police Chief Arthur Smith.

According to Gross' plea agreement, TTP Bloods originated from a street gang known as "the Bloods" that was formed in Los Angeles, California in the early 1970s. As time passed, the Bloods spread to other locations and broke into individual "sets." One such Bloods set based in Compton, California was called Piru Bloods. From this set emerged a subset known as Tree Top Pirus (TTP). The name derived from a group of streets in Compton named after trees.

TTP spread throughout the country, including Maryland. TTP in Maryland has its roots in a local gang which began in the Washington County Detention Center in Hagerstown, Maryland in about 1999. The gang was formed for mutual protection in response to the aggression of other inmates from Baltimore and spread throughout Maryland mostly by recruiting from inside Maryland prisons. Over time, a group of female gang members formed a subset of TTP known as the Tree Top Pirettes.

According to his plea agreement, Gross was a member of the TTP Bloods. From at least

2005 through February 2008, other TTP members obtained drugs from Gross to sell on the street. According to witnesses, Gross sold or traded one of the guns used in the murder of Marquell Smith on December 17, 2006 and Gross was one of the TTP members called on to commit a shooting, when needed.

On August 8, 2004, Gross stabbed Lamont Jackson several times in the arm and as Jackson was fleeing from the area, he heard Gross state, "I'm gonna come back and kill you." The next day, Gross and another man located Jackson in his bedroom and fired four rounds at him from their handguns. Jackson was struck in the stomach and hip. While recovering in the hospital, Jackson and another witness identified Gross as a shooter. Gross twice told a witness that he shot and stabbed Lamont Jackson.

Jackson was murdered on November 17, 2006 by two other TTP Bloods members, in retaliation for Lamont Jackson testifying against Gross for the 2004 stabbing and shooting.

This case is the result of a long-term joint investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Baltimore City Police Department, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office and the United States Attorney's Office. Fourteen defendants, including Gross, have pleaded guilty to the RICO conspiracy and 11 of those have been sentenced to between 21 months and 30 years in prison. Sherman Pride, a/k/a Dark Black and DB, age 35, of Salisbury, Maryland; and Ronnie Thomas, a/k/a Rodney Thomas, Skinny Suge and Tall Vialz, age 36, of Baltimore, were convicted on January 28, 2010, of participating in the TTP racketeering conspiracy. Pride also was convicted of conspiring to distribute cocaine. Three defendants charged in the racketeering conspiracy, Anthony Fleming, Michelle Hebron and Tavon Mouzone, are currently on trial. Charges against Keili Dyson and Keon Williams are pending. Four defendants have pleaded guilty to gun or drug charges.

Mr. Rosenstein and Ms. Jessamy gave special thanks to Secretary Gary Maynard of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Commissioner J. Michael Stouffer of the Maryland Division of Correction; Director Patrick McGee of the Maryland Division of Parole and Probation; and the officers at the Western and North Branch Correctional Institutions and the Wicomico County Detention Center for their work in the investigation and prosecution of this case.

Mr. Rosenstein and Mrs. Jessamy also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hanlon, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Mason, a cross-designated Baltimore City Assistant State's Attorney, who prosecuted this Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force case, and Assistant State's Attorney LaRai Forrest who assisted in the prosecution.