

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Six People Indicted for Retaliatory Kidnapping Plot

DETROIT – Four individuals were arrested today on charges of kidnapping and conspiracy to commit kidnapping in November 2021 when the defendants are alleged to have kidnapped and beaten an individual they wrongly believed participated in a carjacking, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

U.S. Attorney Ison was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Paul Vanderplow, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

The six individuals were charged in an October 12, 2022, indictment which was unsealed today.

Charged were:

Cortez Blake, 21, Detroit, MI

Karamoh Turner, 21, Detroit, MI

Semaj Ayers, 20, Detroit, MI

Maijah Greene, 22, Detroit, MI

Shatonna Kimbrough, 19, Detroit, MI

Armond Williams, 20, Detroit, MI

As alleged in the indictment, beginning on November 14, 2021, and continuing into November 15, 2021, the defendants joined other unnamed individuals in the kidnapping and beating of a person as part of an organized effort to extract information about a carjacking the conspirators wrongly believed the person took part in. The victim of the carjacking, Cortez Blake, is alleged to have participated in the kidnapping conspiracy.

Four of the defendants will be making their appearance in federal court today.

If convicted, the defendants each face up to life in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and up to five years of supervised release.

“The coordinated effort to victimize and seek retaliation in this case is stunning,” said U.S. Attorney Ison. “This is a clear example of what we see too often: violence causing more violence, and it has to stop. Today’s arrests should send a clear message to those thinking about carrying out street justice – it will not be tolerated.”

“Criminal groups who violently terrorize our communities will be aggressively pursued, and eradicated from our communities,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge Paul Vanderplow. “We are proud of the collaborative effort with the U.S. Attorney’s office, our Federal, State of Michigan, and Local partners resulting in getting these violent gang members off our streets.”

The United States Attorney's Office and the ATF are focused on prosecuting those individuals who are using firearms to commit violent acts against people in the Eastern District of Michigan. The strategy is a part of the United States Attorney's Office's Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative. PSN continues to be the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders works together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. PSN is an evidence-based program that focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs to pursue lasting reductions in crime.

These charges are just some of the tangible results of this joint effort. The United States Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners will continue to work together to reduce violence in our communities. Along with ATF, this case has been investigated with the assistance of the Office of Inspector General – U.S. Department of Labor, the United States Marshals Service, the Detroit Police Department's Gang Intelligence Unit, and the Michigan Department of Corrections.

An indictment is not evidence of guilt. Defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Topic(s):
Violent Crime

Component(s):
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