



*Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney
City of Alexandria
Press Release – 2021-003*

Seventeen Indicted in Racketeering/Murder Investigation

2021-003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2021

The Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney's Office announced that seventeen people have been directly indicted by a Grand Jury and arrested on charges related to a conspiracy to commit racketeering in the City of Alexandria, Virginia. The charges relate to a complex drug trafficking organization that was allegedly responsible for the sale of large amounts of marijuana in Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland.

Additionally, it is alleged that on November 7, 2020, a member of the organization murdered Yousef Omar in the 4800 block of West Braddock Road in Alexandria. It is alleged that the murder was committed in furtherance of the drug trafficking organization.

During the investigation of this matter, the following items were seized in multiple jurisdictions:

- At least 23 firearms including three assault rifles and multiple high capacity magazines;
- At least \$274,795 in U.S. currency;

- More than 150 pounds of high-grade marijuana, worth an estimated \$500,000 in value;
- Cocaine and other controlled substances;
- Electronic money counting machines, digital scales, vacuum sealers, packaging materials, suitcases, and owe sheets;
- Multiple fictitious identification cards and driver's licenses;
- Multiple vehicles used in furtherance of the organization's racketeering activity.

The case involved coordinated law enforcement operations in a number of different jurisdictions, to include Virginia, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Washington state, and California. The Vice/Narcotics Unit of the Alexandria Police Department was the lead investigative agency and was assisted by a number of law enforcement agencies who played a substantive and important role in the case. These partner agencies include:

Arlington County Police Department

Virginia State Police

Homeland Security Investigations

Metropolitan Police Department

Montgomery County Police Department

Prince George's County Police Department

Azusa, California Police Department

United States Marshals Service

Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority Police

Drug Enforcement Administration

Valley Narcotics Enforcement Team

Fairfax County Police Department

National Insurance Crime Bureau

Prince William County Police Department

Port of Seattle Police Department

Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

Los Angeles Border Enforcement Security Task Force

United States Postal Inspection Service

Los Angeles Police Department

Washington/Baltimore HIDTA

Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for the City of Alexandria

Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter said: "I want to thank the Alexandria Police Department's Vice/Narcotics Section and the multitude of partner law enforcement agencies for their diligent and professional work on this investigation. Firearms and violence follow racketeering organizations as the number of weapons seized and the alleged murder charge illustrate. Illegal money, no matter how it is obtained, begets the potential for robbery, assault, and homicide.

"The collaborative effort between the partner law enforcement agencies shows true professionalism and determination to halt the cycle of violence inherent in complex drug trafficking organizations. The cooperation between agencies exhibited in this case provides a new paradigm for complex, multistate investigations."

Ahmed Mohammed Shareef, a 23-year-old resident of Cosa Mesta, California, was indicted by the Grand Jury on three counts: First-Degree Murder, Use of a Firearm in the Commission of Murder, and Conspiracy to Commit

Racketeering. Shareef is in custody in California awaiting extradition to Alexandria.

The First-Degree Murder charge carries a maximum penalty of life in the penitentiary. The Use of a Firearm charge carries a maximum penalty of 3 years in the penitentiary. The Racketeering charge carries a maximum penalty of 40 years in the penitentiary and a fine of not more than \$1 million.

An additional sixteen defendants have been arrested on charges of Conspiracy to Commit Racketeering. No trial dates have been set in the matter.

The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney notes that all charged persons are presumed to be innocent and the Commonwealth bears the burden of proving all charged offenses beyond a reasonable doubt by presenting admissible evidence in a court of law. The mere fact that a person has been indicted is not evidence that they are guilty of any criminal offense.

Rule 3.6 of the Virginia State Bar's Rules of Professional Conduct for Attorneys states, in pertinent part: "A lawyer participating in or associated with the... prosecution ... of a criminal matter that may be tried to a jury shall not make or participate in making an extrajudicial statement... that the lawyer knows, or should know, will have a substantial likelihood of interfering with the fairness of a trial by jury." Therefore, the Commonwealth is prohibited from discussing the evidence, its trial strategy, or its work product prior to disposition of these matters.