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November 18, 2016

PRESS RELEASE

Coatesville Police Seize Guns and Drugs from Heavily Fortified House

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan and Coatesville Police Chief John “Jack” Laufer announced the filing of criminal charges against Ronald Smith of Coatesville. The police discovered large quantities of drugs, five firearms, and money in the defendant’s heavily fortified residence when executing a search warrant. The drugs included heroin, cocaine, and crystal methamphetamine. The firearms included guns with a 30-round magazine, an extended barrel, and an obliterated serial number. The defendant is wanted and still at-large.

District Attorney Hogan stated, “The police found the unholy trinity of guns, drugs, and money in the defendant’s house. This defendant was poisoning the Coatesville community and was a threat to law enforcement. The streets in Coatesville will be a little safer when we get him into custody.”

Coatesville Police Chief Jack Laufer stated, “Through good investigative work and utilizing a joint team approach involving the Borough of Parkesburg Police Department, the Chester County Sheriff's K-9 Unit, and the Chester County District Attorney’s Office, the City of Coatesville Police Department’s Vice Unit was able to remove a sizable quantity of dangerous drugs and firearms from the streets of Coatesville. The fight against violent crime most often associated with the illicit drug trade requires a team approach not only within law enforcement, but

also with the community we serve. Together we can bring about positive change within the City of Coatesville.”

The defendant is 41 years old. He resided at 438 Valley Road, Coatesville, Pennsylvania. He was unemployed.

The allegations of the criminal complaint are as follows:¹

Based on drug activity out of the defendant’s residence at 438 Valley Road in Coatesville, the police obtained a search warrant for the residence. The police executed the search warrant on November 11, 2016.

The police discovered that the defendant’s residence was heavily fortified and contained surveillance equipment consistent with drug dealing. The front door was reinforced with a steel security bar. There were surveillance cameras both outside and inside the residence, as well as a monitor showing live video feed from the cameras. The defendant’s personal belongings and correspondence were present throughout the residence.

Inside the residence, police found large quantities of cocaine (both powder and crack), heroin, crystal methamphetamine, prescription pills, and marijuana. The home included digital scales to weigh drugs, plastic baggies for packaging, and a cutting agent to increase the weight of the drugs. There also was a safe for storing drugs and cash present in the house.

The police also located and seized numerous firearms, including: a long rifle with a scope, a revolver with an obliterated serial number, a .357 magnum revolver with an extended barrel, a Tec-9 semiautomatic firearm, and a Colt .380 caliber semiautomatic firearm with high capacity magazines. The defendant is prohibited from possessing firearms under Pennsylvania law.

The defendant has been charged with possession with intent to distribute drugs, firearms offenses, and related charges. He currently is a fugitive.

District Attorney Hogan added, “The defendant was running a full-service pharmacy for illegal drugs. He chose to protect his illicit activity in a fortified bunker and with prohibited firearms. However, persistent efforts and good

¹ A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

teamwork by Chester County law enforcement shut down the defendant's drug operation."

This case was investigated by the Coatesville Police Department, with assistance from the Parkesburg Police Department, the Chester County Sheriff's K-9 Unit, and the Chester County District Attorney's Office. Anyone with further information should contact Coatesville Detective Jonathan Shave at (610) 384-2300. Information can also be provided anonymously on a recorded tip line at (610) 380-1830 or by texting the keyword of Coatesville and your message to 847411.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan