



U.S. Department of Justice

Kevin G. Ritz
United States Attorney
Western District of Tennessee

Odell Horton Federal Building
167 North Main Street
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

PRESS RELEASE

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United States Attorney Ritz Announces Recent Prosecutions for “Switches” and Releases Public Service Announcement about Illegal Machine Gun Conversion Devices

Memphis, TN – Today, United States Attorney Kevin G. Ritz, along with federal and local law enforcement partners, announced the prosecution of 26 individuals for crimes involving machine gun conversion devices, also known as “switches” or auto sears. These switches transform a semiautomatic firearm into a machine gun capable of firing dozens of rounds of ammunition in a couple of seconds.

United States Attorney Ritz also released a 60-second public service announcement, available [here](#), about the danger posed by switches. The PSA features a trained agent demonstrating how these illegal devices turn a firearm into a machine gun that is essentially impossible to control. In the PSA, United States Attorney Ritz also explains that simply possessing a switch can result in significant penalties—up to 10 years in federal prison.

United States Attorney Ritz said: “Switches are illegal and highly dangerous devices that convert semiautomatic firearms into machine guns. These devices threaten public safety and make the gun violence problem even worse. As our recent prosecutions show, we are vigorously enforcing the federal laws prohibiting machine gun conversion devices. I encourage the public to watch our new public service announcement and spread the word: anyone with a switch will face significant time in federal prison.”

The U.S. Attorney’s Office has made prosecution of crimes involving switches a top priority. In recent months, Assistant United States Attorneys in both Memphis and Jackson have prosecuted 26 individuals for illegally possessing switches. These cases, which are detailed below, were investigated by federal and local law enforcement partners, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Memphis Police Department (MPD), and the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office (SCSO).

“These illegal machine gun conversion devices more commonly referred to as ‘switches’ can significantly enhance the rate of fire of a semi-automatic firearm. This enhancement adds to the potential lethality of the weapon. Our communities are experiencing an unacceptable increase in firearm related violence and these devices have no place on our streets,” said Marcus Watson, Special Agent in Charge, ATF, Nashville.

Memphis Police Chief, Cerelyn “CJ” Davis said, "Gun violence has increasingly plagued our city in recent years, causing death and trauma throughout. Switches and similar devices have only exacerbated these urgent issues in our community, prompting the need for stronger enforcement. We are grateful for U.S. Attorney Kevin Ritz and his team of prosecutors for aggressively seeking the maximum penalties for individuals who brazenly commit violence."

“The illegal importation and use of switches create a significant threat to public safety. As simple to manufacture as they are quick to install, conversion devices turn regular firearms into a machine gun capable of inflicting tremendous harm in a split second. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) is committed to stopping the transnational criminal organizations that conspire to import these illegal firearm conversion kits used for violent criminal acts and harming the communities we serve,” said Special Agent in Charge Rana Saoud, HSI Nashville.

“The United States Marshals Service always stands ready to assist our local, state, and federal partners in executing arrest warrants for suspects who possess weapons with ‘switches’ or modifications. These suspects pose a consequential threat to our communities and will be a priority for our fugitive task forces,” said Tyreece Miller, United States Marshal, Western District of Tennessee.

The following defendants have been convicted and sentenced for federal crimes involving switches. There is no parole in the federal system.

- **Prenagio Baines, 21.** Baines was a member of AOB, a violent hybrid street gang operating in Memphis. On March 13, 2022, MPD officers encountered a vehicle parked on the wrong side of the road. Baines got out of the vehicle. Officers discovered a .40 caliber pistol with a machine gun conversion device attached. Baines admitted that he left the gun in the vehicle. He pled guilty to possessing a machine gun and was sentenced on February 27, 2023, to 24 months in prison.
- **Daniel Banks, 23.** Banks fled from officers on foot during a traffic stop. He dropped a firearm with a switch after he jumped over a fence. Banks pled guilty to drug and gun crimes, including possession of a machine gun, and was sentenced on March 24, 2023, to 84 months.
- **Justin Hardaway, 23.** Hardaway was a member of the Grape Street Crips, a violent street gang operating in Memphis. In March 2022, officers followed Hardaway driving a stolen Dodge Charger into the parking lot of a convenience store. The officers placed Hardaway into custody and recovered a .40 caliber Glock

handgun with a machine gun conversion device attached. Hardaway pled guilty to possessing a machine gun and was sentenced on February 14, 2023, to 30 months.

- **Terrance Jones**, 24. ATF learned that Jones was selling drugs, which led to a search warrant executed on his trap house. Jones had a home camera system that recorded him selling drugs with firearms. The switch charge derived from a separate incident—a shooting at Young Dolph’s memorial. Jones was in the car that fled the scene, and the evidence showed that he discarded a firearm with the switch. Jones pled guilty. He was sentenced on October 27, 2022, to 30 months on the switch charge and a consecutive 60 months on a separate firearm charge.
- **Daniel Kirtman**, 25. Kirtman, a convicted felon, sold a short-barreled rifle. Agents arrested Kirtman and seized a Glock pistol equipped with an extended magazine and a machinegun conversion device. Kirtman pled guilty to firearm crimes and was sentenced on December 7, 2022, to 102 months in prison.
- **Michael Thomas**, 24. Thomas sold and possessed multiple machine gun conversion devices. Thomas pled guilty to possessing the switches and possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. He was sentenced on December 1, 2022, to 84 months.
- **Michael Naylor**, 26. Investigators discovered Naylor worked at a gun store and was selling machine guns, switches, and other firearms. During the investigation, agents met with Naylor on two different occasions to purchase switches. In the first meeting, undercover ATF agents purchased three switches, and in the second meeting agents purchased one switch. On the final occasion, Naylor brought twenty switches to sell. ATF agents arrested him. Naylor pled guilty and was sentenced on March 3, 2023, to 27 months.

The following defendants have been convicted of federal crimes involving switches and are awaiting sentencing. Under federal law, the penalty for possession of a machine gun is up to 10 years in prison.

- **Kameron Chatman**, 20. Chatman was seen in a Facebook video with a switch. On March 9, 2023, he pled guilty in federal court in Jackson, Tennessee, to firearm crimes, including possession of a machine gun.
- **Avonta Gregory**, 21. Gregory, a member of the AOB violent hybrid street gang in Memphis, pled guilty on May 1, 2023, to possessing a Glock firearm with a 22-round magazine and a machine gun conversion device.
- **Martavious Hodges**, 23. Hodges, a member of the Fast Cash violent hybrid street gang in Memphis, sold firearms with switches on January 7, 2022, and January 26, 2022. On February 9, 2022, officers arrested Hodges with six switches before the third controlled delivery. He pled guilty on March 22, 2023, to possession of a machine gun.

- **Cameron Person, 20.** Law enforcement executed a search warrant on Person's residence and located four switches, materials to put together another one, and two firearms. He pled guilty in federal court in Jackson, Tennessee, on March 7, 2023, to possession of a machine gun.
- **Michael Rimmer, Jr., 21.** Law enforcement recovered five firearms possessed by Rimmer. Two had switches. Rimmer pled guilty on March 20, 2023, to a drug crime and possession of machine guns.
- **Mitchell Shaw, 23.** Shaw pled guilty on September 28, 2022, in federal court in Jackson, Tennessee, to possessing a machine gun.
- **Maurice Wilson, 38.** Defendant possessed a switch and pled guilty on March 14, 2023, to firearm crimes.
- **Dionco Lowe, 25.** During the investigation into Lowe, law enforcement recovered four firearms and a machine gun conversion device. Lowe pled guilty on May 9, 2023, to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The following defendants have been charged with federal crimes involving switches. Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is an accusation and only contains charges. Each defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it is the government's burden to prove each defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

- **Nakiel Addison, 25.** Addison was indicted on March 30, 2023, for federal gun crimes, including possessing a firearm with a switch.
- **Khamron Roberts, 25.** Roberts was indicted on April 27, 2023, for federal gun crimes, including possessing a firearm with a switch.
- **Roosevelt Wilson, 42.** Wilson was indicted on April 27, 2023, for federal gun crimes. His alleged crime involved ordering 25 switches from China.
- **Jaquan Bridges, 22.** Bridges was indicted on April 27, 2023, for possessing a machine gun. His alleged crime involved shooting at a SCSO deputy on the interstate. Investigators recovered a gun with a switch.
- **Jaquarious Conner, 25.** Conner was indicted on November 10, 2022, for drug and gun crimes, including possession of a machine gun. Conner was investigated for trafficking drugs and switches. Officers recovered multiple firearms, one of which was a Glock with a machine gun conversion device.
- **Quatavious Doggett, 23.** Doggett was indicted on March 16, 2023, for being a felon in possession of a firearm and possession of a machine gun. His alleged crime involved possession of a firearm with a switch.

- **Pariss Johnson**, 36, **Paris Brown**, 22, and **Leroy Cloyd**, 22. These three defendants were indicted on February 16, 2023, for possessing machine guns. During the investigation, law enforcement performed undercover purchases of machine gun conversion devices.
- **Timothy Williams**, 25. Williams was indicted on February 7, 2023, for being a felon in possession of firearms and other crimes. During the investigation, law enforcement recovered four firearms and a machine gun conversion device.
- **Eddie Martinez**, 25. Martinez was indicted on January 26, 2023, for possession of a machine gun. During the investigation agents recovered a Glock 9mm pistol with a switch and loaded with 23 rounds.

Several defendants charged in this series of indictments are alleged to be convicted felons. Under federal law, is it illegal for an individual convicted of a felony to possess a firearm or ammunition.

Anyone with information about switches or other federal gun crimes can call 1-800-ATF-GUNS (1-800-283-4867).

United States Attorney Ritz offered his gratitude to the Assistant United States Attorneys who are prosecuting these cases, as well as the law enforcement partners who investigated the cases.

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For more information, please contact Public Information Officer Cherri Green at (901) 544-4231 or cherri.green@usdoj.gov. Follow @WDTNNews on Twitter for office news and updates.