

# Multiple Defendants Indicted on Federal Firearms and Drug Charges

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

SOUTH GEORGIA – Possession of a Machinegun brought one of several federal indictments. James Timothy Johnson (30) of Waycross, has been charged with Possession of a Machinegun.

Johnson’s indictment is one of several newly returned indictments in the Southern District of Georgia. The indictments include felony charges for illegal firearms possession and drug distribution, while additional defendants have been sentenced to federal prison or await further proceedings after pleading guilty to federal gun charges.

Jill E. Steinberg, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia has stated, “Illegally possessed firearms continue to present a challenge for law enforcement agencies, including the increasing threat from guns illegally modified for fully automatic fire. With our law enforcement partners, we will target these illegal weapons and remove them to make our streets safer.”

Information released this week from Steinberg’s office indicates that the cases are prosecuted as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods in collaboration with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the FBI, to reduce violent crime with measures that include targeting convicted felons who illegally possess guns.

Those indicted during the March term of the U.S. District Court Grand Jury include:

• Jacorey Rivers (32) of Savannah, charged with Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon; Possession of a Machinegun; and

Possession with Intent to Distribute 400 or More Grams of Fentanyl;

• Christopher Michael Owens, a/k/a “Lambo,” (41), Robert Michael Waltz, a/k/a “Hurricane,” both of Hinesville, and Juan Carlos Rosado Morla (27) of Gainesville are charged with multiple drug trafficking offenses. Owens and Waltz are charged with Possession with Intent to Distribute Crack Cocaine; Waltz and Morla are charged with Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute and to Distribute 500 Grams or More of Cocaine, and Attempted Possession with Intent to Distribute 500 Grams or More of Cocaine; Owens is charged with Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana, Possession of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Drug Trafficking Crime, and Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon; and Morla is charged with Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute and to Distribute Marijuana and 500 Grams or More of Methamphetamine, and Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana and 500 Grams or More of Methamphetamine;

• Garland D. Williams (55) Hephzibah, charged with Possession with Intent to Distribute 500 Grams or More of Methamphetamine, and Possession of a Firearm During a Drug Trafficking Crime;

• James Timothy Johnson (30) of Waycross, charged with Possession of a Machinegun; and,

• Christopher Jeremy Blair (44) of Pembroke, Ga., charged with Possession of Firearms by a Convicted Felon.

The U.S. Attorney’s Office of South Georgia reminds readers that all indicted

defendants are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty.

On another note, defendants recently adjudicated on federal firearms charges include:

• Chester Morgan (53) of Savannah, was sentenced to 46 months in prison after pleading guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Savannah Police officers arrested Morgan in May 2023 after finding a co-worker’s stolen pistol in his vehicle.

• Wesley Rosenberg (25) of Ludowici, was sentenced to 20 months in prison and fined \$1,000 after pleading guilty to Engaging in the Firearms Business Without a License. An ATF investigation determined Rosenberg unlawfully imported and sold firearm silencers.

• Isaac C. Brown (40) of Guyton, awaits sentencing after pleading guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Georgia Ports Authority police conducting enhanced screenings at the Garden City Terminal found a pistol inside Brown’s truck in March 2023.

• Joshua Bowser (29) of Savannah, awaits sentencing after pleading guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Savannah Police officers found Bowser in possession of a semiautomatic pistol with an extended magazine while serving an arrest warrant related to a shooting in Savannah’s City Market.

• Kenneth Oliver Riley (60) of Savannah, awaits sentencing after pleading guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Savannah Police officers found a revolver in Riley’s pocket during a shooting investigation.

• Brian Wesley Dean (45) of Bloomingdale,

awaits sentencing after pleading guilty to Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted Felon. Pooler police officers found a pistol in Dean’s possession during a traffic stop.

• Jose Miguel Marrero (27) and his mother, Jacqueline Christmas (50), both of Statesboro, each await sentencing after pleading guilty to False Statement During the Purchase of a Firearm. An ATF investigation determined that Marrero and Christmas purchased multiple handguns from a Bulloch County gun store, falsely claiming that Marrero was the buyer of the guns when they were actually purchased by and delivered to Christmas’ brother-in-law in New York.

The United States by the Southern District of Georgia U.S. Attorney’s Office will prosecute all of the cases.

For reader’s information, under federal law, it is illegal for an individual to possess a firearm if he or she falls into one of nine prohibited categories including being a felon; illegal alien; or unlawful user of a controlled substance. Further, it is unlawful to possess a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense or violent crime. It is also illegal to purchase – or even to attempt to purchase – firearms if the buyer is a prohibited person or illegally purchasing a firearm on behalf of others. Lying on ATF Form 4473, which is used to lawfully purchase a firearm, also is a federal offense.

Persons interested in learning more information from the ATF on the lawful purchasing of firearms, can go on-line to: <https://www.atf.gov/qa-category/atfw-form-4473/>.

# Ocilla PD Officer fired for Policy Violation or Questioning ICSO Deputy about Racial Profiling?

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

IRWIN COUNTY, Georgia – Former Ocilla Police Department (OPD) Officer Ronald Dixon is questioning why an Irwin County Sheriff’s Office (ICSO) Deputy stopped him in January 2024. At the time Dixon was stopped, Dixon states that he was making a call for help, because he had a flat tire. Dixon is a 35 year veteran law enforcement officer with the Ocilla Police Department (OPD).

Both the OPD Chief as well as the Irwin County Sheriff’s Office Chief were notified by Dixon regarding his concern stemming from his January 2024 experience. Dixon believes he was later unjustifiably fired from his OPD law enforcement position, because he reported his

concerns.

Since then, Ronald Dixon has gone public with his fear that he was fired after reporting the off-duty incident. The event involved an ICSO traffic stop.

At first Dixon thought that the ICSO deputy had noticed his flat tire and was about to get vehicle assistance. Assistance was not what the ICSO deputy offered Dixon. Instead, Dixon was given a ticket, because he was on his cell phone. The experience has left Dixon with the feeling that the ICSO deputy pulled him over and wrote him a ticket because he had racially profiled Dixon.

When asked about Dixon’s reported incident, ICSO Sheriff Cody Youghn states that he does not believe that

his ICSO deputy racially profiled Dixon.

Former Officer Dixon has made his Letter of Dismissal from the Ocilla Police Department public. The letter states that Dixon violated OPD’s policy when he did not “obey a lawful order during a traffic stop”, “used profane language”, and made a “false report” when he claimed he was being racially profiled by the ICSO deputy.

A simple reading of the Ocilla Police Code of Conduct states, “profanity isn’t allowed while conducting city business.” The code does not address use of profanity when off duty.

This story will be updated as additional information is made available.

# Remerton PD Investigating Baytree Place Shooting

By Carol A. Gasser Moore

VALDOSTA, Georgia – A shooting event in the 1900 block of Baytree Place, Valdosta, late Saturday, March 16th has prompted Remerton Police Department (RPD) to begin an investigation. RPD have indicated that shortly after 4:00 p.m. on Saturday a victim (24) was standing on a Remerton city sidewalk when approached by a suspect, who shot at him. One bullet grazed the victim, who was taken to SGMC (South Georgia Medical Center).

According to the RPD, the Valdosta Police Department (VPD) responded to assist responding agencies when the incident first occurred, but the incident was in the city limits of Remerton.

The victim was taken to the hospital to be treated for his injuries. The injuries were non-life threatening. No further information about the victim’s injuries has been released.

RPD Investigators say that this shooting is an isolated incident. Those RPD investigators believe that there is no threat to the rest of the community. The incident is under investigation by the Remerton Police Department. Investigators have developed one lead, though the identity of the incident’s suspect is not yet known. Citizens with any information on this case are asked to please contact the Remerton Police Department at 229-247-2320.

**39th Session CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY**

The 39th Session of the Citizens Police Academy (CPA) will be held each Thursday night. April 4 - May 23. 6:00 - 8:00 pm.

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

Officer Randall Hancock  
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229-293-3090

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