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PRESS RELEASE

**Operation Silent Night
Sweeps Back Through Coatesville -- 40 Defendants Charged**

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and Coatesville Police Department announced the results of "Operation Silent Night" in Coatesville for the summer of 2017.

Operation Silent Night originally was created in 2012. It is a comprehensive law enforcement operation that combines the resources of the Coatesville Police Department, the Chester County Detectives, and other law enforcement agencies. The operation targets drug dealers, gun crimes, and other violent offenders. The operation uses rolling search warrants, enhanced police patrols, grand jury proceedings, targeted arrests, and coordinated prosecutions to maintain pressure on criminals. Operation Silent Night is designed to prevent and reduce violent crime, as well as gather intelligence about ongoing criminal activities.

District Attorney Tom Hogan stated, "Over the past year, we have seen increased violent crime rates in cities like Philadelphia, Chicago, and Wilmington. Coatesville experienced multiple murders in 2016. Rather than take a wait-and-see approach, Chester County law enforcement decided to attack the issue aggressively and proactively, reinstating Operation Silent Night. As a result, multiple dangerous criminals have been taken off the streets of Coatesville. Coatesville experienced a single homicide this past summer, which was quickly solved.

Operation Silent Night lets the good citizens of Coatesville sleep soundly, but gives the criminals nightmares.”

Coatesville Police Chief Jack Laufer stated, “Once again, the teamwork approach to law enforcement proves to be the most effective. By partnering with county, state, and federal law enforcement, and our county and federal prosecutors, we are able to efficiently identify, arrest, and prosecute those criminals who commit the violent crime that is so disruptive to our communities.”

A list of the most recent arrests for Operation Silent Night is attached. The defendants have been arrested for dealing drugs, illegal firearms trafficking and possession, and violent offenses.¹ The defendants are being prosecuted by both local and federal authorities.

For instance, defendant Terrance “T-Rok” Rokins has been charged with 15 counts of drug trafficking as well as being a felon in possession of a firearm. Jonte Dalton is in federal custody, charged with trafficking in firearms. Steve “Black” Pittman is charged with drug dealing. Edwar Pinto and Taj Richards have been charged with murder.

Kevin Dykes, Chief of the Chester County Detectives, stated, “There are names and faces in this list who have been problems for Coatesville going back more than a decade. And there are some new young guys getting into the life of drugs and violence. Operation Silent Night sends a simple message to criminals: stay out of Coatesville.”

Chief Laufer also stated, “If you ask police officers who are the criminals in the community most likely to be involved in murders or other violent crimes, the police are able to identify those individuals without any problem. Operation Silent Night gives us the resources and focus to arrest these defendants for drugs and weapons offenses before they kill somebody, and maybe before an innocent child gets hit in the crossfire. When we see the violent crime rates spiking in big cities like Philadelphia and smaller cities like Chester in Delaware County, we recognize the need to use innovative tools to protect our own community. The Coatesville community and Coatesville Police Department want the City of Coatesville to be a safe place for families and businesses to thrive.”

District Attorney Hogan added, “The Coatesville Police Department, working with the rest of Chester County law enforcement, has done an outstanding

¹ Criminal defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

job of keeping the people of Coatesville safe. Operation Silent Night will continue to keep the pressure on criminals. This multi-faceted operation is a model program that other cities can and should use. We are proud to see Chester County law enforcement leading the way.”

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan