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Law Enforcement Partnership Targets Armed Robbers of Miami Beach Tourists

Five Individuals Convicted and Sentenced to Prison

Benjamin G. Greenberg, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Robert F. Lasky, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Miami Field Office, and Daniel J. Oates, Chief, City of Miami Beach Police Department, announce the conviction and sentencing of five individuals who participated in armed robberies of Miami Beach tourists.

In February of 2017, **Roy William Reed**, 24, from Memphis, Tennessee held up two tourists at gunpoint on Ocean Drive, in Miami Beach, while **Ashley Brooks**, 25, also from Memphis, acted as a lookout (Case No. 17-CR-20930). During the course of the robbery, Reed took, among other items, the victims' wallets, cash and cellular telephones. Shortly after the robbery, Brooks attempted to use one of the victims' credit cards at a gas station.

On March 13, 2018, Reed pled guilty to conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery, two counts of Hobbs Act robbery, and brandishing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. On the same day, Brooks pled guilty to brandishing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. On May 15, 2018, U.S. District Judge Donald M. Middlebrooks sentenced Reed and Brooks to 124 months and 84 months, respectively. A restitution hearing has been scheduled for Reed and Brooks on July 17, 2018, at 11:00 a.m., before Judge Middlebrooks.

Similarly, in October of 2017, **Rahshard Jovan Stepherson**, 45, and **Vidyapati El**, both of Riviera Beach, and **Kemon Dominique Thompson**, 25, of Opa Locka, held two foreign tourists at gunpoint in a stairwell on Miami Beach (Case No. 17-CR-20895). Stepherson shoved a firearm into the victims' necks and stomachs and forced them to comply with his demands. The three defendants ultimately took the tourists' wallets, watches, and cell phones, before fleeing the crime scene.

On April 10, 2018, a federal jury convicted Stepherson of conspiracy to commit Hobbs Act robbery, Hobbs Act robbery, and brandishing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. Stepherson was sentenced today by Judge Middlebrooks to 360 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$6,600 in restitution to the victims.

Defendants Thompson and El pled guilty, on March 20, 2018, to brandishing a firearm in connection with this robbery. On May 15, 2018, Judge Middlebrooks sentenced El to 86 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$8,620 in restitution to the victims. Thompson was sentenced today by Judge Middlebrooks to 96 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$8,300 in restitution to the victims.

All five defendants were also ordered to serve 5 years of supervised release, following their release from prison.

These armed robbery cases are part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. Attorney General Jeff Sessions reinvigorated PSN in 2017 as part of the Department's renewed focus on targeting violent criminals, directing all U.S. Attorney's Offices to work in partnership with federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement and the local community to develop effective, locally-based strategies to reduce violent crime.

Mr. Greenberg commended the investigative efforts of the FBI and the City of Miami Beach Police Department in this matter. Mr. Greenberg thanked the Shelby County Sheriff's Office in Memphis for their assistance. These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Daniel Marcet, Jessica Obenauf, and David Turken.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on www.pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov.