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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Larell Watkins Accepts Responsibility for his Role in the BFL/CBL RICO Conspiracy

Buffalo, New York, January 6, 2020 – Larell Watkins of Buffalo, New York, pleaded guilty to two counts in a federal indictment charging him with a racketeering conspiracy and a narcotics conspiracy. The charges relate to Mr. Watkins’ role in criminal activities that took place in and around the Town Gardens Apartments and the east side of Buffalo between 2014 and 2018. Mr. Watkins entered his pleas of guilty this afternoon in Buffalo before United States District Judge Lawrence J. Vilardo. If District Judge Vilardo accepts the plea deal agreed to by the parties at sentencing, Mr. Watkins will be sentenced to 19 years in prison for his role in the conspiracy.

Watkins’ attorney, Robert C. Singer, Esq., of Singer Legal PLLC, stated, “Larell admitted today that he sold marijuana and conspired with others to engage in drug sales and acts of violence in violation of federal law. He also admitted to conducting several shootings. And he admitted that his actions facilitated the murder of someone by one of his codefendants. The decision to plead guilty today was a difficult decision for Mr. Watkins, not because he fails to understand the gravity of his conduct – he regrets his actions deeply – but because he has a young wife and daughter and the penalties in federal court are much higher than he would have faced in state court. Spending the next half of his life away from his wife and son is heartbreaking, but Larell wanted to accept responsibility for his actions so that he, his family, and others affected by his actions can move forward.”

Attorney Singer added: “I think it is important to note that this case involved a lot of boys from a depressed and often dangerous area of Buffalo. I say “boys” because many, like Larell, were children when they got exposed to life-threatening danger on a regular basis in Buffalo. Larell was shot twice in one year by people from other neighborhoods who did not like him simply because of where he grew up and who he associated with. A year later, these enemies shot and killed his older brother Laron. It was in this environment that he chose to obtain a firearm and to use it against others who shot at and threatened him.”

“Rather than use the enormous resources of the federal government *after-the-fact* to indict boys like Larell and have these boys sentenced under a law normally reserved for punishing mobsters, we should use this case as an example of why, instead, we should use federal resources *proactively* to help boys like Larell before they are pressured into a life of crime. If that was done here, then it is possible Larell Watkins would not have found himself in federal court at all. Simply put, we need to do more. Long-term incarceration in federal facilities is not a solution to this problem.”

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