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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Defendants Who Targeted Walmart in Multi-State Thefts Sentenced to Prison, More Than \$360,000 in Merchandise Stolen in 11 States *State vs. Anthony Lamar Belser and George Frank Mayo*

CANTON, GA (September 17, 2026) – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that Anthony Lamar Belser, 56, and George Frank Mayo, 52, have been sentenced to prison for charges related to a multi-state organized retail crime spree targeting Walmart stores. Belser was sentenced to 25 years, with the first 10 years to serve in prison. Mayo was sentenced to 40 years, with the first 20 years to serve in prison.

Over the course of 10 months, beginning in August 2022, the co-defendants stole \$362,844 worth of merchandise from Walmart stores in Georgia, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

A theft of nearly \$15,000 in stolen merchandise from Walmart in Canton led to the investigation, charges, and conviction in this case.

On December 3, 2022, Canton Police Department responded to Walmart on Riverstone Parkway to investigate a theft of high-value electronics. Security footage showed two men removing items from secured display cases at approximately 7:30 a.m. Just hours later, suspects matching their description and driving the same rental car were involved in a theft at Walmart in East Ellijay. Mayo was apprehended in East Ellijay, but Belser fled the scene.

In collaboration with Walmart Asset Protection, investigators used security footage, credit card transactions, bank records, and rental car contracts to link Belser and Mayo to the Canton and East Ellijay thefts, as well as 49 other felony shoplifting incidents that took place between August 2022 and June 2023. Investigators also determined that Belser was a founding member of the Brooklyn-based street gang and shoplifting crew known as the Lo-Lifes.

The defendants carried out thefts in a systematic manner. After entering a store, they concealed small, high-value items inside a larger product, such as a laundry basket. They then transferred the hidden merchandise into a retail box that they had previously emptied. They sealed the box and paid for the single, boxed product, which appeared to be a legitimate purchase, stealing the items contained inside.

“What initially appeared to be a single shoplifting incident ultimately exposed a larger criminal operation,” said Assistant District Attorney Rachel of the Gang and Organized Crime Unit, who prosecuted this case on behalf of the State. “These defendants repeatedly used the same calculated scheme across multiple states to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars in merchandise. The collaboration between law enforcement and retail partners was

critical to dismantling this criminal enterprise, and we remain committed to working closely with them to combat organized retail crime.”

In July 2023, the Cherokee County Grand Jury indicted Belser and Mayo, and warrants were issued for their arrest.

On January 11, 2024, Belser was apprehended in New York after a traffic stop. On April 18, 2025, Belser pled guilty to violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) Act and organized retail theft. He was sentenced to 25 years with the first 10 years in prison and the remainder on probation.

In January 2025, a BOLO was issued for Mayo and shared among law enforcement agencies and retailers. On March 27, 2026, an Atlantic Station security officer spotted Mayo and Atlanta Police Department apprehended him. On September 10, 2026, Mayo pled guilty to violation of the RICO Act (2 counts) and organized retail theft. He was sentenced to 40 years with the first 20 years to serve in prison and the remainder on probation.

Both defendants must pay restitution in the amount of \$328,448. Superior Court Judge Tony Baker also barred them from the confines of the State of Georgia, with the exception of one county.

“Organized retail crime continues to be a problem not only in Cherokee County, but across the country,” said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “Georgia’s RICO Act gives us a powerful tool to hold offenders accountable for the full scope of their criminal conduct, rather than treating each theft as an isolated offense. The sentences imposed in this case reflect the seriousness with which we approach these criminal enterprises, and we will continue to aggressively prosecute organized retail crime in Cherokee County.”

The case was investigated by Canton Police Department and Walmart Asset Protection and prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Rachel Murphy, with the Gang and Organized Crime Unit, Office of the District Attorney. In addition, the Georgia Retailers Organized Crime (GROC) Alliance shared the BOLO with members, ultimately leading to a security officer spotting Mayo in Atlantic Station. Mayo was apprehended by organized retail crime investigators with the Atlanta Police Department.

Timeline of Thefts

August 2022: Morrisville, NC; Smyrna, TN; Nashville, TN; Manchester, TN

September 2022: Adel, GA; Tampa, FL; Palmetto, FL; Bradenton, FL

October 2022: Florence, SC; Columbia, SC; Richmond, VA; Glenn Allen, VA

November 2022: Woodbridge, VA; Worcester, MA; Amherst, NH; Chelmsford, MA; Tewksbury, MA;

Windham, ME; Scarborough, ME; Weymouth, MA; Brockton, MA; Waterford, CT; Old Saybrook, CT;

Raceland, LA; Thibodaux, LA; Baton Rouge, LA

December 2022: Baker, LA; Baton Rouge, LA; Carencro, LA; Lafayette, LA; Broussard, LA; Canton, GA;

Ellijay, GA

April 2023: Cumming, GA; Woodstock, GA

May 2023: Atlanta, GA; Locust Grove, GA; Buford, GA; Milton, GA; Woodstock, GA; Acworth, GA (twice)

June 2023: Loganville, GA; Snellville, GA; Dunwoody, GA; Lithia Springs, GA; Marietta, GA; Gainesville, GA;

Oakwood, GA; Buford, GA; Marietta, GA

The RICO Act

Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act penalizes organized crime that is motivated by pecuniary gain or economic or physical threat or injury. Crimes charged under the RICO Act typically involve two or more defendants acting together as an "enterprise" to carry out a common scheme or motive to effectuate the crimes. Georgia's RICO Act allows prosecutors to incorporate into the indictment crimes committed by defendants not only statewide, but nationwide as well.

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The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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