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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: December 11, 2023**

**RE: State of Maryland vs. Bernard Lamont Staten**

On Monday, December 4, 2023, Bernard Lamont Staten, 68, of Edgewood, Maryland, pled guilty to Attempted Second Degree Rape and Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine in two separate cases before the Honorable Judge Diane Adkins-Tobin. Both pleas were binding plea agreements, and Staten will be sentenced to 30 years to serve on December 18, 2023, the maximum of 20 years to serve on the Attempted Second Degree Rape and 10 years to serve consecutive on the Possession with Intent to Distribute, which was above the sentencing guidelines.

Facts presented to the court in support of both guilty pleas revealed that on January 24, 2023, a woman was stranded on the side of the road, awaiting a tow truck. Despite not knowing her, the Defendant offered to give her a ride to her home in Westminster, Maryland. The Defendant instead traveled to the Motel 6 in Edgewood, Maryland. He then grabbed her arm, removing her from the truck and taking her into a room he had rented at that hotel. Once inside the room, he pushed her onto the bed and attempted to engage in sexual intercourse with her. The victim attempted to scream and refuse his advances, and the Defendant placed a pillow over her face to quiet her while he tried to remove her pants continuing to indicate his desire to engage in sexual intercourse. The victim continued to yell and began kicking the wall and elsewhere to fight off the Defendant, and eventually, she believed she kicked him in the groin area, which allowed her to run out of the room. Once out of the room, she got the attention of a guest in another room, who contacted law enforcement on her behalf. The Defendant tried to lure the victim back into his vehicle, a Chevrolet Avalanche, by telling her that he had her wedding rings which he had removed from her finger in the truck, and she should come retrieve them, which the victim refused to do. Harford County Sheriff's Office patrol deputies responded to the scene, and later the Criminal Investigations Division pursued the investigation. Pursuant to that investigation, on January 26, 2023, Harford County Sheriff's Office detectives conducted a Search and Seizure Warrant on the Chevrolet Avalanche belonging to Staten where they located the victim's rings. In addition to the rings, the detectives also located over 13 grams of crack cocaine in individually wrapped bags in the vehicle and over \$965 in cash on the Defendant's person when he was arrested. The quantity of the cocaine and other circumstances indicated that

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the Defendant possessed the cocaine with the intent to distribute that substance resulting in the second case.

At the conclusion of the plea proceedings, State's Attorney Alison M. Healey, who prosecuted this case, stated "Given the Defendant's age, a thirty-year sentence in these cases ensures that the community will never again be at risk to be victimized by this Defendant. In addition, it also continues our message to our community that we will not tolerate these acts of violence, distribution of drugs, or any type of crime for that matter in Harford County. I commend the victim in this case for her strength on the night of this incident and hope that she will feel safe knowing that Mr. Staten is no longer a threat to her or this community."

Additionally, Ms. Healey expresses her gratitude to Detective Reynolds, Detective Smith, Sergeant Maddox, Detective Pachkoski, Detective Majewski, Detective Wilsynski, Sergeant Underhill, and the entire Harford County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigation Division for their diligence in investigating this case, as she could not have received this substantial sentence without their hard work.