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ROCHELLE BILAL
Sheriff

**OFFICE OF THE
SHERIFF**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Release

Philadelphia Sheriff's Office Holds Press Conference Refuting Inaccurate City Controller's Report Released on September 20, 2023

Philadelphia, PA – The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Rochelle Bilal held a press conference today to set the record straight about the misleading and inaccurate statements made in the City Controller's Report released on September 20, 2023. In response to a request for information in May 2023, the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office submitted a 159-page response that included details, descriptions, and diagrams highlighting our investigation.

During the press conference, Sheriff Bilal went step-by-step in discussing the inaccuracies in the City Controller's Report.

- The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office has taken many steps to organize the armory, including the labeling and tagging of every weapon received by the office since January 7, 2020.
- The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office cannot answer inconsistencies that were derived because of bad recordkeeping in the past, prior to taking office.
- The City Controller's Office failed to properly audit the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office armory for more than 20 years. That led to a completely disorganized armory under past administrations.

- The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office has installed a state-of-the-art security system, with motion detectors and security cameras to ensure the safekeeping of all firearms.
- The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office is using the BEAST system for tracking firearms. This provides the office the ability to track when the firearms come in, when they leave, which weapons are returned to individuals, which weapons are set aside to be burned, etc.
- The City Controller's Report is based on assumptions, presumptions, and inaccuracies. Likewise, the report only references alleged weapons from the 1970s through 2014.

During the press conference, Undersheriff Tariq Shabazz discussed the timeline of the important armory audit since the Bilal Administration:

- In 2019 the Audit began prior to Sheriff Bilal's administration.
- January 6, 2020: Sheriff Rochelle Bilal was sworn into office to begin her first term as Sheriff of the City and County of Philadelphia.
- January 7, 2020: The City Controller and/or agents of the City Controller office physically came to the Office to conduct an armory audit.
> *Point of note the Sheriff's Office was in the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic so the audit took longer to complete.*

November 17, 2021: City Controller Rebecca Rynhart submitted her letter outlining recommendations:

- Process for asset tagging firearms and other weapons
- Process for maintaining a detailed inventory
- Accountability in tracking PFA (protection from abuse) weapons
- Continue to track PFA weapons
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office, Philadelphia Police Department, and the members of the City of Philadelphia

All of those recommendations were accomplished under the Bilal Administration.

- January 22, 2022: The Sheriff's Office submitted a justification memo to then Controller Rynhart outlining every update we've accomplished from the BEAST (software program), armory (tagging weapons brought in/existing)
- April 4, 2023: Philadelphia City Council Budget Hearing
- April 17, 2023: A Press Release was posted on the phillysheriff.com website that states we have not misplaced guns.
- May 23, 2023: The City Controller's office requests for additional information.
- June 8, 2023: The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office 159-page response to City

- Controller, Acting City Controller Charles Edacheril, CPA
- September 20, 2023: The Philadelphia Sheriff's Office received the City Controller's Report, and the City Controller released a Press Release on their findings to the public and to our office.

"To be clear, there is no definitive way to say that any firearms are missing. Under my administration which began on January 6, 2020, there are no weapons missing or unaccounted for. We can account for every weapon received by the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office since I took office and will continue to account for each weapon in our possession moving forward". – Sheriff Rochelle Bilal.

Press Conference Video Link: [Click Here](#).

Photos of the Armory before and after the Bilal Administration: [Click Here](#).

About the Office of The Sheriff of Philadelphia

As the pandemic continues, the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office wants to ensure that Philadelphia residents can remain in their homes, which is why the Sheriff's Office supports any programs that help residents. It is important that Philadelphia residents contact the Sheriff's Office if they believe they have been illegally evicted by someone who was impersonating a Deputy Sheriff. The Sheriff's Office will also continue to host food giveaways and virtual town halls to answer any questions that residents may have. If there are any questions that a resident may have, they can reach out to the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office at 215-686-3530 or 215-686-3542.

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