



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Northern District of Illinois
Western Division*

*Patrick J. Fitzgerald
United States Attorney*

*308 West State Street - Room 300
Rockford, Illinois 61101*

*PH: (815) 987-4444
FAX: (815) 987-4236*

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PRESS CONTACTS:
AUSA John McKenzie (815) 987-4444
Joseph Bruscato (815) 987-3160
Winnebago County State's Attorney

UNDERCOVER "ATF" RESALE SHOP IN ROCKFORD ATTRACTED ILLEGAL SALES OF MORE THAN 50 FIREARMS AND NARCOTICS

ROCKFORD, Ill. — By word of mouth, news began to spread around Rockford beginning in April 2009 that the managers of a new resale shop in the 1200 block of Broadway were willing to purchase firearms, stolen property and narcotics and, soon, business was brisk. During the next six months, the managers of "Tony Tones All Thangs Fine" purchased more than 50 firearms, including a dozen sawed-off shotguns, most of them allegedly sold illegally either by individuals who were previously convicted felons or by individuals who believed they were selling firearms to convicted felons.

When the shop closed at the end of October 2009, local, state and federal law enforcement authorities, led by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agents, removed the hidden video equipment that had allowed them to view and secretly record individuals who had used the back room of "All Thangs Fine" (whose initials spell "ATF") to make illegal sales of firearms and narcotics during the six-month undercover investigation.

The probe culminated today with the arrests this morning of up to 18 local defendants on state and federal charges, including eight Rockford residents who were indicted on federal charges and 10 others who are facing state charges. The charges were announced today by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Joseph Bruscato, Winnebago County State's Attorney; Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of ATF; Greg Lindmark, Rockford Police Deputy Chief; Richard A. Meyers, Winnebago County Sheriff; Stephen A. Luzinski, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Drug Enforcement Administration; and Jonathon Monken, Director of the Illinois State Police.

"I applaud the hard work and cooperation of the local, state and federal law enforcement agencies that conducted this undercover investigation, which was designed to remove illegal firearms from circulating in Rockford, as well as to prosecute the alleged offenders," Mr. Fitzgerald said. "We all share the same goal of making Rockford a safer community by making people think twice before they engage in illegal firearms sales. We will continue to investigate and prosecute such cases."

Winnebago County State's Attorney Bruscato said: "Federal and state law enforcement agencies are working collectively to hit the crime issue hard. The Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office is committed to the continued collaborative efforts that produce these kind of results."

Mr. Traver, of ATF, said: "The cooperative and dedicated actions of the agencies involved in this lengthy operation have contributed to a safer Rockford. Every illegal firearm removed from the hands of an unlawful possessor represents one or more potential violent crimes that was not and will not be committed."

Rockford Police Deputy Chief Lindmark said: "This investigation, with the cooperation and assistance of our federal, state and local law enforcement partners, demonstrates the continuing coordination and collaboration to reduce crime in the City of Rockford. Our continued partnerships with various law enforcement agencies will enhance our ability to leverage our resources."

Winnebago County Sheriff Meyers said: "Cooperation between local, state and federal agencies has again led to the successful conclusion of a long-term undercover case. This represents the best of law enforcement to make this community a safer place to live."

A federal grand jury in Rockford on Tuesday returned eight separate sealed indictments, each charging a single defendant with firearms and/or narcotics offenses stemming from the undercover investigation. According to one indictment, the undercover resale shop was managed between April and October 2009 by two cooperating individuals, each of whom had previously been convicted of a felony. Before opening the store, ATF agents and other law enforcement authorities had installed hidden and disguised video equipment that allowed officers, who were operating the video surveillance equipment from the back room of the store, to view and secretly record individuals who entered the back office area to illegally sell firearms and contraband. The store managers each wore a transmitter that allowed agents to listen in on and secretly record conversations regarding the alleged illegal transactions.

Authorities arrested 5 of the 8 federal defendants and 7 of the 10 state defendants earlier today and the federal and state indictments have been unsealed. Three of federal defendants appeared in U.S. District Court in Rockford this morning and were ordered detained without bond until a detention hearing could be held on February 18, 2010. The remaining 2 federal defendants who have been arrested will appear this afternoon in U.S. District Court. Of the 8 federal defendants, 2 are currently in Winnebago County Jail and will appear in U.S. District Court for arraignment on February 25, 2010 at 11:00 a.m.

Details of each of the eight federal cases follow:

Marcus J. Causey, 24, of Rockford, was charged in a 20-count indictment in connection with allegedly illegally selling 16 firearms — seven shotguns, six handguns and three rifles — between May 4 and Aug. 18, 2009. He was charged with one count of selling 16 firearms without a federal firearms dealer's license, 13 counts of selling firearms to a convicted felon, five counts of possessing unregistered sawed-off shotguns, and one count of possessing a shotgun with an obliterated serial number.

The indictment lists the firearms that Causey allegedly illegally sold as: an Excam .38 caliber two-shot derringer; a Winchester 16 gauge shotgun; a Harrington & Richardson 12 gauge shotgun; a Winchester 12 gauge shotgun; a Colt .32 caliber pistol; a Remington 12 gauge shotgun; an Iver Johnson double barrel 12 gauge shotgun; a Remington .243 caliber rifle; a Charter Arms .22 caliber rifle; a Stevens 12 gauge shotgun; a Savage 20 gauge shotgun; a Bryco Arms .380 caliber pistol; an Iver Johnson .38 caliber revolver; a Harrington & Richardson .32 caliber revolver; a Marlin .22 caliber rifle; and a Heritage Manufacturing .22 caliber revolver;

Derell C. Valentine, 25, also known as “Frog,” of Rockford was charged in a 20-count indictment in connection with allegedly illegally selling nine firearms, including five shotguns, on various dates in May 2009. He was charged with one count of selling nine firearms without a federal firearms dealer’s license, nine counts of being a previously convicted felon in possession of a firearm, seven counts of selling firearms to a convicted felon, three counts of possessing unregistered sawed-off shotguns;

Darrius D. Parker, also known as “D Block,” 27, of Rockford, was charged in a four-count indictment with firearms and narcotics offenses. He was charged with two counts of being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm, one count of distribution of approximately 40 Ecstasy tablets, and one count of distribution of approximately 46.6 grams of crack cocaine;

Marcus Anderson, also known as “Leroy,” 22, of Rockford, was charged in a four-count indictment in connection with allegedly illegally selling seven firearms, including two shotguns, on various dates between June and August 2009. He was charged with one count of selling seven firearms without a federal firearms dealer’s license and three counts of selling firearms to a convicted felon;

Tyrone M. Smith, also known as “T.Y.,” 32, of Rockford, was charged in a five-count indictment in connection with allegedly illegally selling five firearms, including two shotguns, on various dates between May and August 2009. He was charged with one count of selling five firearms without a federal firearms dealer’s license, three counts of selling firearms to a convicted felon, and one count of possessing an unregistered sawed-off shotgun;

Edward M. Ingram, also known as “E-Dub,” 22, of Rockford, was charged in a three-count indictment with one count of selling a firearm to a convicted felon, one count of distribution of approximately 56.9 grams of crack cocaine, and one count of possession with intent to distribute approximately one-half gram of heroin;

Brendon R. Turner, also known as “Black,” 22, of Rockford, was charged in a two-count indictment with one count of being a convicted felon in possession of firearm and one count of distribution of approximately two grams of crack cocaine; and

Jarrett Leon Lewis, also known as “Nation,” 26, of Rockford, was charged in a two-count indictment with one count of being a convicted felon in possession of firearm and one count of distribution of approximately 1.4 grams of crack cocaine.

The maximum penalties on each count of the federal offenses charged in these indictments are as follows: being a convicted felon-in-possession of a firearm, selling a firearm to a convicted felon, and possessing an unregistered sawed-off shotgun — 10 years in prison; selling firearms without a federal firearms dealer’s license, and selling a firearm with an obliterated serial number — 5 years in prison, and each count carries a maximum fine of \$250,000. Each of the federal narcotics distribution counts carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, except the crack cocaine count against Ingram carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and a maximum of life in prison, and the crack cocaine count against Parker carries a mandatory minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 20 years in prison.

The state defendants and charges against each are:

Jesse Leach, 47, violation of the Controlled Substances Act (delivery of Hydrocodone) (Class 2 felony);

Lorenzo Lipscomb, 45, violation of the Controlled Substances Act (delivery of Hydrocodone) (Class 2 Felony);

Skyanne B. Rentsch, 21, Unlawful Distribution of a Lookalike Substance (Class 3 Felony);

Eddie Roberson, 52, two counts Aggravated Unlawful Use of a Weapon (Class 4 Felonies) and two counts Unlawful Sale of Firearms (Class 4 Felonies);

Raul Rodriguez, 18, two counts Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapons and Unlawful Sale of Firearms (Class 4 Felonies);

Sierra Taylor, 23, violation of the Controlled Substances Act (delivery of cocaine) (Class 1 Felony);

Torrence M. Taylor, 24, five counts Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapons and two counts Unlawful Sale of Firearms (Class 4 Felonies);

Israel O. Barnabas, also known as “Michael Harrington,” 31, delivery of cocaine (Class 1 Felony) and Unlawful Distribution of a Lookalike Substance (Class 3 Felony);

Jacob M. Goldsmith, 18, two counts Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapons and Unlawful Sale of Firearms (Class 4 Felonies); and

Adan E. Ibarra, 17, 11 counts Aggravated Unlawful Use of Weapons and 7 counts

Unlawful Sale of Firearms (Class 4 Felonies); Unlawful Use of Weapons (Class 3 Felony); and Gunrunning (Class X Felony)

The federal cases are being prosecuted in U.S. District Court in Rockford by Assistant United States Attorney John G. McKenzie.

The public is reminded that indictments contain only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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