



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Charlotte Field Division

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ILLEGAL FIREARMS TRAFFICKING RING DISMANTLED *Ring Leader Sentenced in Federal Court*

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The Charlotte Field Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), has long recognized that the fabric of our society is undermined by violent crime that is enhanced by illegal firearms trafficking.

Acknowledging the seriousness of this issue, Special Agent in Charge Zebedee T. Graham is making combating all violent crime his top priority, but specifically that which is facilitated by the use of firearms involving the illegal firearms trafficking trade. “The most effective strategy to reduce violent crime is to work jointly with our law enforcement partners and share intelligence and resources that target firearms traffickers,” said Graham.

On May 31, 2007, Terry Charles Williams, age 32, was sentenced in U.S. District Court in Florence, S.C., to 60 months imprisonment for his role in the firearms trafficking conspiracy after previously pleading guilty to the charges in federal court. Williams was a convicted felon and on federal supervised release for a carjacking conviction in Atlanta during the time of the firearms trafficking conspiracy.

In 2004 and 2005, Williams assisted his brother, Ian McKenzie Williams and six other firearms straw purchasers, by taking them to various gun stores and pawnshops holding federal firearms licenses throughout the Horry County area, and conducted straw purchases. A straw purchase occurs when a person that can legally purchase a firearm does so for a person that cannot legally purchase or possess one. Overall, approximately 72 firearms were illegally purchased and trafficked to other states during this conspiracy. To date, 17 of those firearms have been recovered after crimes that were committed in Philadelphia.

All of the conspiracy defendants involved in this case have previously entered guilty pleas to the charges in federal court and have been sentenced from federal probation to terms of 33 months in federal prison.

The Conway, S.C., Police Department played a significant role in the investigation. During the execution of a state search warrant in June 2005, officers recovered firearms sales receipts and copies of the Philadelphia Daily News featuring stories about gun trafficking and sources of crime guns in the Philadelphia area. This information provided invaluable leads to further advance the investigation that ultimately lead to its successful conclusion.

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“Violent crime, violent criminal gangs, and those individuals that use firearms in the commission of these crimes are of great concern to us,” added Graham. “We will continue to work in a team environment with our other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and the United States Attorney’s Office to identify illegal firearms traffickers and maximize our effectiveness.”

This case was worked out of the ATF Charleston Field Office, and was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Judicial District of South Carolina, Florence Division.

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