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FORMER SHREVEPORT GUN DEALER PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARM

Defendant faces up to 10 years in federal prison

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . One day after a jury had been selected for his trial, RONALD AMEND, age 54, of Shreveport, pleaded guilty to illegal possession of an unregistered weapon, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced. The guilty plea was entered today before United States District Judge Tom Stagg.

A superseding indictment was filed in November 2006 charging AMEND with three counts of possession of an unregistered firearm, one count of dealing firearms without a license, two counts of possession of an unregistered machine gun and one count of forfeiture. AMEND pleaded guilty to one count of possession of an unregistered firearm.

This indictment was the result of an investigation that began in 2004 when it was determined that AMEND had illegally imported a silencer, machine gun and other firearms from Germany. A subsequent investigation revealed that AMEND was involved in other firearms-related criminal activity that resulted in the surrender of his federal firearms license. A short time later, during an unrelated investigation, an ATF

agent working with Caddo Parish Sheriff's detectives, learned that AMEND was continuing to operate his firearms business, Ronny's Weapons, LLC, without a license. Agents, acting in an undercover capacity, met with AMEND and arranged to purchase two assault rifles. When AMEND delivered the weapons to the undercover agents, he was arrested by ATF and found to be in possession of the two rifles and additional unregistered weapons. A search of his residence resulted in the seizure of over 100 additional weapons including machine guns, silencers and sawed-off shotguns.

AMEND faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Sentencing has been set for February 5, 2008.

This case is being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide program begun in 2001, and designed to reduce violence in our communities by aggressively using existing federal firearms laws. United States Attorneys, District Attorneys, Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, and state officials have created partnerships to address crimes involving firearms. Generally, any arrest involving a firearm is reviewed immediately by local, state and federal authorities to decide whether the case is best suited for prosecution under state or federal law, or a combination of both. Project Safe Neighborhoods is expected to lead to long prison terms for violent criminals, and a significant reduction in violent crime. To date, federal prosecutions under Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Western District of Louisiana have led to the incarceration of criminals responsible for violent crimes such as homicides, aggravated assaults, drug trafficking, robbery, carjacking and burglary.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Shreveport Resident Agency, and the Caddo Parish Sheriff's Office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl M. Campbell.

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