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FORMER SUBURBAN GUN SHOP OPERATOR CHARGED WITH ILLEGALLY EXPORTING SOME 220 FIREARMS TO CANADA IN 2006

CHICAGO – A Park Ridge man who previously operated a suburban gun shop was arrested today and charged in a complaint with violating the federal Arms Export Control Act for allegedly exporting approximately 220 firearms from the Chicago area to Windsor, Ontario, two years ago. The defendant, **Ugur Yildiz**, who is approximately in his mid-30s, was arrested this morning by agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) without incident near his home, announced Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Gary J. Hartwig, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Chicago; and Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Chicago.

Yildiz, also known as “Mike Yildiz,” appeared this afternoon before Magistrate Judge Arlander Keys and is being held in federal custody pending a detention hearing at 2 p.m. on Monday.

According to the complaint affidavit, Yildiz obtained a Federal Firearms License to sell guns in 2002 and operated Chicagoland Bells, a gun shop located at 3319 North Manheim Rd., in Franklin Park. ATF subsequently revoked the license effective in September 2005. At the time of the

revocation, the gun shop had a known inventory in excess of 200 firearms, according to the affidavit, and Yildiz transferred ownership and registration of 207 firearms from Chicagoland Bells into his name. Those guns remain registered to Yildiz.

Since June 2006, Canadian law enforcement has recovered 25 guns in Canada that are registered to Yildiz, the complaint states. All but one of the guns were recovered during the execution of search warrants in connection with investigations of drug and violent crimes. One of the guns was left in a taxi in Canada and two guns registered to Yildiz were traced to attempted homicides in Canada, according to the affidavit. In addition to the weapons found in Canada, on April 30, 2006, 15 firearms registered to Yildiz were discovered in a dumpster in a suburb of Detroit, not far from the Canadian border.

Once in mid-April and twice in June 2006, records show that Yildiz entered Canada at the Detroit Ambassador Bridge, and each time returned to the United States a day or two later.

The Arms Export Control Act prohibits exportation of defense articles, including certain firearms, without a license from the State Department. Most, if not all, of the firearms registered to Yildiz fall within the designation of defense articles, the complaint alleges, adding that Yildiz never applied for or received a government license to export firearms.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Sheri Mecklenburg.

If convicted, violating the Arms Export Control Act carries a maximum penalty of 10 years prison and a \$1 million fine. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

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

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