



ATF NIBIN Program Hits of the Week



March 25 to April 15, 2002

NIBIN Branch, Firearms Programs Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

Week of 4/15: This week's hit links crimes a year apart; the Fort Worth, Texas Police Department's efforts to include unsolved cases in NIBIN have yielded valuable investigative leads. In the first crime, a female victim was raped and murdered; the cartridge casings recovered at the scene were retained as evidence. There were few investigative leads and few suspects in this investigation. When Fort Worth PD received its NIBIN equipment four months later, evidence from this case and other unsolved cases was entered into the system. Almost a year after the first murder, police responded to the scene of a rape and murder. Ballistic evidence and investigative work led police to two suspects. When the firearm recovered during the arrest of the suspects was testfired and imaged into NIBIN, the system indicated the likelihood of a link to both murders. Examination of the original evidence confirmed that the weapon was used in both murders. Two defendants await court action in the cases.

Week of 4/8: In Fort Worth, Texas, a shooting occurred at an elementary school just as students were being dismissed for the day. After the shooting, Fort Worth PD officials arrested two defendants and seized a firearm. The seized firearm was imaged into NIBIN by Fort Worth PD officials, and correlation revealed a possible link to a recent robbery-murder at a local grocery store. Firearms examiners compared the original evidence and verified that the gun used in the school shooting had also been used in the robbery-murder. The two defendants in the school shooting were then also charged with the murder.

Week of 4/1: Stockton, California police used their NIBIN equipment to discover links between two shootings two months apart in which two people were injured. The shootings were believed to be related to activity of Asian gangs. Two months later, in the course of impounding an automobile, a Stockton police officer recovered a .45 caliber handgun from the floor of the auto. The driver was arrested and charged with traffic offenses and possession of a firearm. The recovered firearm was testfired; after the casing was imaged into the NIBIN system, a link was discovered to the earlier shots-fired incidents. Through Project Exile, ATF assisted Stockton PD in tracing the firearm and performing a criminal background check on the defendant. This cooperation contributed to a Federal case against the defendant; the State of California is also considering additional charges. In this case, ATF helped State and local law enforcement remove a violent offender from society through the NIBIN and Project Exile programs.

Week of 3/25: In a crime in Indianapolis, two suspects attempted to force a victim into their car at gunpoint, then shot at him as he fled on foot. Police recovered cartridge casings at the scene, and they were entered into the Indianapolis-Marion County NIBIN system. The following month, police responded to the scene of a homicide by shooting; the cartridge casings they recovered there were also submitted for NIBIN entry. When a suspect was arrested in the murder, the firearm recovered from his home was testfired and the evidence entered into NIBIN. The system highlighted potential links, later confirmed by firearms examiners, from this weapon to both the murder and the earlier attempted murder (not previously known to be related). This connection through NIBIN, in addition to further police work, enabled authorities to identify and charge two defendants in the crimes. One defendant was convicted of the murder; charges are still pending against him in the attempted murder. His associate has pled guilty to attempted murder, and awaits sentencing.