



ATF NIBIN Program Hits of the Week

October 14 to October 28, 2002



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

Week of 10/28: Oklahoma City police have used NIBIN successfully to solve shooting incidents. Officers responded to a shooting at a carwash. The victim had gotten into an argument with the suspect at a nearby store just before the shooting. The victim did not know the suspect, nor did he get a good vehicle description. Several cartridge casings were recovered at the scene and submitted for NIBIN entry. Three weeks later, Oklahoma City police attempted to stop a vehicle on traffic charges. When the car was stopped, the driver ran from police, and officers pursued him. During the foot pursuit, the officers saw a black object drop from his shorts. One officer caught the suspect, and he was taken into custody. Ammunition was discovered in the victim's clothing; a firearm with matching ammunition was found where officers had seen the black object fall. The firearm was seized, testfired and entered into NIBIN, and a link discovered to the earlier drive-by shooting. The suspect taken into custody matched the description of the shooter in the earlier incident, and charges are now pending against him, including aggravated assault with a firearm and possession of a firearm after former conviction of a felony.

Week of 10/21: The Pennsylvania State Police's Harrisburg laboratory is using its NIBIN system to help local police departments develop their other evidence to combat violent crimes. At 10:00 p.m. one evening, Harrisburg Police Department officers responded to the scene of a robbery with shots fired. They recovered ballistic evidence at the scene, including cartridge casings and two bullet fragments, one found in a pickle jar. Further investigation yielded no strong suspects. Three hours later, Harrisburg police investigated a report of shots fired, recovering cartridge casings at the scene. They also observed and stopped a vehicle leaving the area. When one of the car's passengers was found to have a .25 caliber pistol, the firearm was held as evidence and testfired. Evidence recovered at each crime scene and from the testfire of the recovered weapon was entered into NIBIN, and correlation revealed potential links from the recovered firearm to the two shooting crimes. These links were later confirmed by firearms examiners. Given this link between the robbery and shots fired incidents and the firearm in the possession of the car's passengers, police reviewed the surveillance tape from the first incident, and found that the suspect on tape was similar in appearance to the shooter in the second incident. Based on this new information, an arrest warrant was obtained for a passenger in the car, who confessed to police and implicated his cousin and his cousin's girlfriend, also in the car during the second incident. All three were subsequently charged with the robbery.

Week of 10/14: In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the NIBIN system has been useful in assisting law enforcement to gather sufficient evidence in related cases. Pittsburgh police responded to a call of shots fired toward a home. There were no witnesses to the crime; the victim told police that she believed the target of the shooting was her grandson, though he could not make a complete identity of the shooter. Five casings and a bullet were recovered from the crime scene and submitted for NIBIN entry. A month later, a suspect was detained after he threatened another victim with a gun. The suspect's firearm was testfired and the ballistic evidence entered into NIBIN; correlation revealed a potential match to the shots fired incident, and this match was confirmed by firearms examiners. When presented with a photograph of the suspect, the intended victim of the first shooting was able to identify the suspect as the shooter. The link provided by NIBIN gave police additional information to solve both crimes.