



U.S. Department of Justice

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**For Immediate Release:
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April 21, 2009

Event: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Gabriel Kish III et al

**OWNERS OF HIGHLAND GUN BARN FOUND GUILTY
OF DEALING FIREARMS WITHOUT A LICENSE**

The owner and operators of the Highland Gun Barn in Highland, Michigan, were found guilty by a federal jury in Detroit of dealing in firearms without a license, United States Attorney Terrence Berg announced today.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Thomas Brandon of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Found guilty were Gabriel Kish III, 66, and Deborah Summers, 55, of Highland Township. The jury deliberated about 90 minutes before returning the verdict, concluding a five-day trial before United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The evidence presented during trial showed that Gabriel Kish had built the Highland Gun Barn, 2525 Highland Road (M-59), in Oakland County during 1993, and operated it for

many years with his companion and bookkeeper, Ms. Summers, under a federal license to deal in firearms as the Highland Gun Barn, Inc. ATF's Division of Industry Operations inspected the business; found record-keeping violations; and revoked the license in 2005. Kish's son then applied for a federal license to deal in firearms at the Highland Gun Barn under a different business name, but later withdrew his application.

A convicted felon testified at trial that he had repeatedly traded stolen merchandise to Kish and Summers for firearms at the Highland Gun Barn in 2006 and 2007. After that felon was charged with a crime in Flint, he related this to ATF agents, leading to a lengthy undercover investigation during which agents purchased several firearms from Kish and Summers. A search warrant was executed on August 14, 2008, leading to the seizure of 477 firearms at the Gun Barn.

At trial Kish and Summers testified that they were merely selling off Summers' personal collection of about 150 firearms, for which no federal license is required, and that the remaining firearms were Kish's "family collection." Evidence showed, however, that they were routinely purchasing firearms for sale to others, and therefore were engaged in the business of dealing in firearms, rather than merely selling off a personal collection.

Special Agent in Charge Brandon stated, "ATF remains committed to identifying, investigating and recommending for federal prosecution those who deal in firearms without a federal firearms license. Our experience shows us that typically those who engage in this crime flood the streets with undocumented firearms that too often end up being used in violent crimes."

Judge Cleland allowed both defendants to remain free on bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for August 18, 2009. Both defendants face a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment and a fine of no more than \$250,000, as well as the forfeiture of the firearms seized.

Berg commended the agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and

Explosives for their dedication to this case. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert Haviland.