

Briefing Paper

Phoenix Field Division

Phoenix Group VII

(OCDETF Strike Force/Gunrunner Group)

ATF Investigation 785115-10-0004

Operation: Fast & Furious, OCDETF No. SW-AZ-0496

January 14, 2011

Purpose: Indictment and arrest of approximately nineteen individuals involved in firearms trafficking to Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations/Cartels.

Date of Operation: January 25, 2011.

Background: Since October 2009, ATF, and other partners, have been investigating a firearm trafficking organization that is being funded by a drug trafficking organization (DTO) that is involved in violent criminal activity in Mexico, Southern Arizona and many other regions of the United States. These acts contribute to violations of Federal Laws to include Firearms, Narcotics, Money Laundering, and Conspiracy Laws.

Agents believe that the Phoenix-based firearm trafficking group is actively purchasing firearms through straw purchasers using bulk narcotics proceeds. From October 2009 to October 2010 agents have documented that this organization has spent approximately 1.25 million dollars in cash at various Phoenix area FFLs to acquire in excess of 1,900 firearms. The firearms are then being trafficked into Mexico.

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Through these investigative techniques, agents have been able to identify additional co-conspirators and disrupt the firearms trafficking organization by seizing numerous firearms and narcotics. To date, 278 firearms and over fifty (50) pounds of marijuana have been recovered by ATF agents in addition to the numerous firearms and narcotic seizures in Mexico related to this investigation. An additional 72 firearms have been seized by U.S. law enforcement agencies in response to information received from ATF.

Evidence in ATF Custody: 278 firearms, 250 “drum” magazines, thousands of rounds of various caliber ammunition.

OPERATION DETAILS:

Command Post: 3010 North 2nd Street, Phoenix, AZ (OCDETF Strike Force location).

Incident Commander(s): Incident Commander ASAC Jim Needles.

Arrest Teams: Four arrest teams, four search teams.

Additional ATF Support: No additional ATF support outside the reporting division will be needed to complete the operation.

Specialized ATF Support: ATF Special Response Team, (SRT).

Issues/Problems: No issues or problems that are anticipated.

Anticipated Seizures: No significant seizures are anticipated during the enforcement operation.

Media: Acting Director Melson, SAC Newell, and United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Dennis Burke will hold a press conference at the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Action or Follow-up: ATF
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Participants: ATF, IRS, DEA, ICE (HSI), USMS, Phoenix PD, USDA-OIG.

Case Agent: ATF
Telephone:

RAC/GS: ATF
Telephone: