



ATF NEWS

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

FY-03-13
Contact: Andrew L. Lluberes
202-927-8500

For Immediate Release
www.atf.gov
July 16, 2003

STATEMENT ON BRADY CAMPAIGN ALLEGATIONS REGARDING FEDERALLY LICENSED FIREARMS DEALERS

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Department of Justice take the investigation and prosecution of corrupt gun dealers very seriously. But the fact is that the majority of federally licensed firearms dealers are not knowingly engaged in criminal activity. In order to bring federal charges against gun dealers, an actual crime must be committed.

It is misleading to suggest that a gun dealer is corrupt because a large percentage of the guns sold in his store are subsequently used in crime. Many other factors -- including high volume of sales, the type of inventory carried and whether the gun is located in a high crime area -- contribute to the percentages cited by the Brady campaign.

There is no dispute that one corrupt dealer is one too many. But the statistics cited do not provide a complete picture of the types of activities that might warrant federal gun prosecutions. Gun traces, for example, indicate only that a gun has come to the attention of law enforcement. They do not automatically implicate a dealer or purchaser in any wrongdoing.

Large volume gun dealers will by their very frequency of sales have more guns come to the attention of law enforcement than a dealer who sells relatively few firearms.

Multiple sales of firearms by a federally licensed dealer are a legal activity and normal business practice. The simple fact that a licensed dealer sells multiple firearms to a legal purchaser does not automatically indicate criminal activity by either the dealer or the purchaser.

###