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**NEWS**

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Public Affairs Office

**MICROFILM**

April 12, 1976  
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ATF Fact Sheet

PROJECT 300 STUDY

**ACQUISITION**

The Study:

This is an in-depth study of 300 randomly selected handguns submitted to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for tracing.

Purpose: To determine how handguns enter criminal channels, and chart the life history of handguns from the time they are made until their seizure or association with crime.

Handguns were selected from 11,810 handguns traced by ATF between October 1974 and June 1975. Handguns were selected for the sample (a) which had been successfully traced to a retail dealer. (b) which indicated movement interstate. (c) which were introduced into commerce beginning in 1972. (d) which were not known to have been stolen. Guns traced from firearms retailers to first retail purchaser and, as necessary, to other persons who came into possession of each gun.

FINDINGS

Stolen guns

Original ATF source data indicated none of the 300 guns in the study was stolen. Investigation showed that in fact 66 (22%) of the 300 guns were stolen or allegedly stolen. This was because many owners failed to report handgun theft or used theft to explain how guns left their possession.

Of 43 known persons arrested with stolen firearms, 29 (67% of 43) had a felony conviction.

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Invalid identification (Data base, 256 handguns traced to first retail purchaser)

40 persons (16% of 256) used invalid identification to purchase firearms; 24 used false names or addresses; 16 were not residents of states where firearms were purchased.

23 persons (9% of 256) used a Social Security card to purchase firearms, in violation of ATF ruling; 8 of the 23 provided false identification.

Convicted felons

22 of 74 last owners (30 % of 74).

9 of 127 second owners (7% of 127).

16 of 256 first retail owners (6 % of 256).

Felons arrested with trace firearm

22 of 54 last owners (41 % of 54).

7 of 30 second owners (23 % of 30).

9 of 50 first retail purchasers (18 % of 50).

Friends and relatives

25 of 30 (84% of 30) second owners arrested with trace firearms obtained their firearms from friends or relatives.

Note: It was not possible to repeat this analysis beyond the second owner.

Street crime (Data base, 300 handguns)

197 handguns (66% of 300) were used or seized incident to a street crime.

Saturday Night Specials (Data base 300 handguns)

88 handguns (29 % of 300) in the study were so-called Saturday Night Specials by ATF definition: .32 caliber or less, length 3 inches or less, cost \$50 or less.

Narcotics violations (Data base, 300 handguns)

47 handguns (16 % of 300) were involved in narcotics offenses.

Dealer violations (Data base, 300 handguns)

9 handgun traces (3 % of 300) involved retail dealer violations of the Gun Control Act. This figure does not include instances where dealers accepted invalid identification in the purchase of firearms.

Sale and recovery (Data base, 300 handguns)

Florida led all states in this random sample with 38 (13%) of 300 handgun sales. Florida is a state with relatively few restrictions on firearms sales.

New York led all of the states in this random sample in which firearms were traced or recovered. Of 300 handguns, 52 (17% of 300) were traced or recovered in New York, a state with relatively severe restrictions on firearms sales.

Time from first sale to trace or recovery (Data base, 193 handguns used incident to crime)

The average time between the first retail sale of a firearm and its trace or recovery incident to a crime was 13 months.



Public Affairs Office

NCJRS

April 12, 1976  
FY-76-57

AUG 18 1976

ACQUISITIONS

PROJECT 300 STUDY STATISTICS

- An in-depth study of 300 handguns traced by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.
- Purpose: Determine how handguns enter criminal channels, and the life history of handguns from the time they are manufactured until their seizure or association with crime.
- Method: Trace handguns from first retail sale to last known owner.

## PROJECT 300 STUDY

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## SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

The follow-up trace study has revealed a number of significant findings with respect to the transfer of a firearm from its first retail purchaser to its trace or recovery by law enforcement officials.

### 300 FIREARMS TRACED

66 or 22% of the firearms were allegedly stolen.

52 or 79% of these stolen firearms were never reported to the police.

Of the 43 persons who were arrested with stolen firearms, 35 or 81% had a felony conviction or criminal arrest record (i.e. the criminal records of 19 persons were unknown or the thief could not be identified; four firearms have not been recovered).

88 or 29% of the firearms were "Saturday Night Specials".

47 or 16% of the firearms were involved in narcotics offenses.

197 or 66% of the firearms were used or seized incident to a street crime.

181 or 60% of the 300 firearms could not be completely traced, i.e. at least one transferee could never be located to complete the historical life of the firearm.

The average time involved between the first retail sale of a firearm and its trace or recovery was 13 months, (i.e. this average was based on 193 of the available dates in which a firearm was involved in a crime).

#### First Retail Purchaser

The study has shown that 25% of the 256 first retail purchasers had either a felony conviction or criminal arrest record.

16% of the 256 first retail purchasers used a fictitious or invalid identification.

23 or 9% of the 256 purchases were accomplished by use of a Social Security card as identification - 35% of which were fictitious.

24% of the 256 first retail purchasers bought more than one firearm at the time of purchase.

6% of the 256 first retail purchasers were transient military personnel.

20% of the 256 first retail purchasers used or possessed the trace firearm while involved in a crime.

### Secondary Transferee

127 of the 256 weapons were sold to a second transferee.

42% of the 127 second transferees were either a relative or friend of the first purchaser.

17% of the 127 second purchasers had a felony conviction or other criminal arrest record.

24% of the 127 second transferees used or possessed the weapon in a crime and were arrested.

### Last Owner

74 firearms were traced to a third person (last owner).

49% of the last owners had a felony conviction or criminal arrest record.

73% of the 74 last owners used or possessed the firearm in a crime and were arrested.

13 firearm traces were identified as having been transferred to more than three persons after the first retail sale.



Saturday Night Specials - Lost and Stolen Guns  
Narcotic Involvement

TOTAL FIREARMS SUBMITTED FOR TRACING STUDY - 300

Total number of "Saturday Night Specials"	88	(29%)
Total firearms which follow-up investigation revealed to be stolen	66	(22%)
Total firearms stolen from retail dealers	(10)	
Total firearms found to be stolen but not reported	(52)	(79%) (1)
Total firearms shown to be lost by legal owner	5	(2%)
Total firearms lost but not reported	(4)	
Total firearms seized incident to an arrest of an individual involved in narcotics (i.e. narcotics arrest of dealer or possessor)	47	(16%)

(1) 79% of 66 stolen guns.

TOTAL FIRST RETAIL PURCHASERS (FRP)-256

(DATA BASE 256)

FRP's purchasing more than one firearm	61	(24%)
FRP's purchasing more than one firearm who were convicted felons	(5)	
FRP's that could not be contacted or were still in possession of firearm	44	(17%)
FRP's from which firearm was stolen	43	(17%)
Total FRP's identified as convicted felons at time of purchase	(16)	(6%)
Total FRP's identified as having a criminal arrest record at time of purchase	<u>(49)</u>	<u>(19%)</u>
TOTAL	(65)	(25%)
Total FRP's who produced invalid identifi- cation at time of purchase	40	(16%)
Apparent reasons for producing fictitious identification		
1. Lived outside of State of purchase	(16)	
2. Total FRP's who were convicted felons	(7)	
Total FRP's identified as in military at time of purchase	16	(6%)

OVERALL TYPES OF RETAIL DEALERS WHICH COULD BE IDENTIFIED  
(DATA BASE 300)

<u>Retail Store</u>	<u>Sporting Goods</u>	<u>Retail Gun Store</u>	<u>Pawn Shop</u>
104	60	64	40

TYPES OF RESIDENCE - (FRP) (WHERE DETERMINED)

<u>Houses</u>	<u>Apartments</u>	<u>Mobile Trailers</u>
161	54	11

<u>Hotel/Motels</u>	<u>Barracks</u>	<u>Other</u>
3	7	5

SEX - (FRP) (WHERE DETERMINED)

<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
229	32

RACE - (FRP) (WHERE DETERMINED)

<u>Caucasian</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Indian</u>
193	61	4	3

RESIDENCES - (WHERE DETERMINED)

<u>Permanent</u>	<u>Temporary</u>
166	60

AGE - (WHERE DETERMINED)

The average age of the first retail purchaser in this study was 37 years old.

(FRP) ARREST INFORMATION

(DATA BASE 50)

Total FRP's arrested with trace firearms	50	
FRP's arrested with firearm who had criminal arrest record	11	(22%)
FRP's arrested with firearm who had prior felony conviction	9	(18%)
FRP's arrested who produced invalid identification at time of purchase	14	(28%)

Apparent reasons for producing fictitious identification

1. FRP's who were also convicted felons (3)
2. Lived outside of State of purchase (8)

Total FRP's arrested with trace firearms and involved in narcotics	15	(30%)
FRP's in military at time of purchase and arrested with trace firearm	3	(6%)

TYPES OF DEALERS FROM WHICH ARRESTED FRP'S BOUGHT FIREARM

<u>Retail Store</u>	<u>Sporting Goods</u>	<u>Retail Gunshop</u>	<u>Pawn Shop</u>
15	14	10	11

SECOND TRANSFEREE (ST)

(DATA BASE 127)

Total ST's identified	127	
Total ST's with criminal arrest record	12	(10%)
Total ST's with felony conviction	9	( 7%)
Total ST's with narcotic involvement	8	( 6%)
Total ST's arrested with trace firearm	30	(24%)
Total transfers in which ST was relative or living with FRP	(16)	(13%)
Total transfers in which ST was friend of FRP	<u>(37)</u>	<u>(29%)</u>
TOTAL	(53)	(42%)
Total transfers to ST under 21 years of age	4	( 3%)
Total transfers in which ST was last owner and reason for trace unknown	6	( 5%)
Total firearms stolen from ST's	7	( 6%)
Total traces in which trace could not be followed through ST	62	(49%)

(ST) ARREST INFORMATION

ST's arrested with trace firearm	30	
		(DATA BASE 30)
ST's arrested with firearm who had criminal arrest record	8	(27%)
ST's arrested who had prior felony conviction	7	(23%)
ST's arrested with firearms having narcotics involvement	4	(13%)
ST's arrested who obtained firearm from FRP who was a relative or was living with FRP	(11)	(37%)
ST's arrested with firearm who was also friend of FRP	<u>(14)</u>	<u>(47%)</u>
TOTAL	(25)	(84%)

LAST OWNER (LO)

Total number of last owners	74	
		(DATA BASE 74)
Total LO's with criminal arrest record	(14)	(19%)
Total LO's with felony conviction	<u>(22)</u>	<u>(30%)</u>
TOTAL	(36)	(49%)
Total LO's with narcotics involvement	13	(18%)
Total firearms stolen from LO's	6	( 8%)
Total LO's arrested	54	(73%)
		(DATA BASE 256)
Total number of traces involving more than three transfers	13	( 5%)

Due to the large number of ST's and LO's that could not be located, information on the transfer of the firearm from friends and relatives could not be accurately obtained.



(LO) ARREST INFORMATION

(DATA BASE 54)

Total number of LO's arrested with trace firearm	54	
LO's arrested who had a criminal arrest record	(13)	(24%)
LO's arrested who had a prior felony conviction	(22)	(41%)
LO's arrested who were involved in narcotics	11	(20%)

### INVALID IDENTIFICATION

The trace study has determined that of the 256 firearms traced to a first retail purchaser, 40 persons or 16% used fictitious identification with which to purchase a firearm. Sixteen persons lived in a State other than the State of purchase. The remainder of the persons using invalid identification gave fictitious names or addresses. In a large number of traces we were unable to determine the legal State of residence. All the firearms were either traced or recovered in a State different than that of the first purchase.

An ATF ruling now exists which precludes a retail dealer from accepting a Social Security card as the only means of identification obtained from a purchaser of a firearm. The study has shown that 23 persons used a Social Security card as their only means of identification. Of the 23 persons, eight provided fictitious or invalid information on the firearm transaction record.

Eight or (21%) of the 38 purchases originating in the State of Florida were found to have been made with invalid identification.

Of the total number of 40 traces which revealed an individual using fictitious identification, Florida accounted for 20%. (Four traces were omitted because it was the same purchaser on the same date buying additional firearms).

The State of Texas had six traces in which a purchaser used false identification. This was 15% of the 40 traces.

The State of South Carolina had four traces in which a purchaser used false identification. This was 10% of the 40 traces.

These three States comprised 45% of the 40 traces in which invalid identification was used.

Of the 40 purchases in which invalid identification was used, 10 or (25%) of the firearms were recovered or traced in New York.

## RETAIL DEALERS

The trace study revealed that of the 300 firearms submitted, nine traces involved the arrest or violation of the Gun Control Act by a retail dealer.

One investigation in Florida involved a retail dealer filling out the U.S. Treasury Form 4473 with himself as the first purchaser. He would then transfer the firearm to out of State residents. A total of 40 illegal transfers were uncovered. The Gun Shop, its officers and employees were successfully prosecuted.

In South Carolina, a retail dealer was arrested for providing State driver's license numbers to out of State purchasers who used the information to falsify the U.S. Treasury Forms 4473. A total of five illegal transfers were uncovered. This retail dealer was subsequently convicted and is out of the firearms business.

### MILITARY IDENTIFICATION

The trace study has shown that of the 300 traces, 16 were first purchased by persons in the military. Seven firearms were transported across State lines by the military first retail purchaser. Two firearms were transferred to other military personnel who then took the firearm across State lines.

Five military personnel were arrested with the firearm while in the commission of a crime including one for murder and another for attempted murder.

STATES IN WHICH FIREARMS WERE PURCHASED

ALASKA	1
ALABAMA	6
ARKANSAS	3
ARIZONA	4
CALIFORNIA	13
COLORADO	3
CONNECTICUT	5
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	0
DELAWARE	0
FLORIDA	38
GEORGIA	14
HAWAII	0
IDAHO	2
ILLINOIS	21
INDIANA	4
IOWA	0
KANSAS	3
KENTUCKY	4
LOUISIANA	6
MAINE	2

MARYLAND	3
MASSACHUSETTS	4
MICHIGAN	1
MINNESOTA	4
MISSISSIPPI	11
MISSOURI	3
MONTANA	2
NEBRASKA	2
NEVADA	0
NEW HAMPSHIRE	4
NEW JERSEY	1
NEW MEXICO	4
NEW YORK	9 (8 from one dealer investigation)
NORTH CAROLINA	8
NORTH DAKOTA	0
OHIO	15
OKLAHOMA	10
OREGON	5
PENNSYLVANIA	4
PUERTO RICO	0
RHODE ISLAND	0

SOUTH CAROLINA	13
SOUTH DAKOTA	0
TENNESSEE	6
TEXAS	26
UTAH	1
VIRGINIA	20
VERMONT	0
WASHINGTON	0
WISCONSIN	3
WEST VIRGINIA	7
WYOMING	2
MEXICO	0
FOREIGN COUNTRY	1

NOTE: Two of these firearms were purchased on U.S. military installations in foreign countries.



STATES IN WHICH FIREARMS WERE TRACED OR RECOVERED

ALASKA	1
ALABAMA	7
ARKANSAS	2
ARIZONA	3
CALIFORNIA	12
COLORADO	0
CONNECTICUT	3
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	6
DELAWARE	1
FLORIDA	10
GEORGIA	7
HAWAII	0
IDAHO	1
ILLINOIS	3
INDIANA	7
IOWA	0
KANSAS	1
KENTUCKY	3
LOUISIANA	6
MAINE	0

MARYLAND	6
MASSACHUSETTS	12
MICHIGAN	4
MINNESOTA	4
MISSISSIPPI	3
MISSOURI	23
MONTANA	0
NEBRASKA	2
NEVADA	0
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0
NEW JERSEY	16
NEW MEXICO	1
NEW YORK	52
NORTH CAROLINA	8
NORTH DAKOTA	0
OHIO	7
OKLAHOMA	2
OREGON	1
PENNSYLVANIA	14
PUERTO RICO	0
RHODE ISLAND	1

SOUTH CAROLINA	6	
SOUTH DAKOTA	3	
TENNESSEE	9	
TEXAS	21	(8 from one dealer investigation)
UTAH	0	
VIRGINIA	4	
VERMONT	2	
WASHINGTON	8	
WISCONSIN	4	
WEST VIRGINIA	3	
WYOMING	1	
MEXICO	3	
FOREIGN COUNTRY	7	

STATE IN WHICH FALSE  
IDENTIFICATION WAS USED

ALABAMA

CONNECTICUT

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

FLORIDA

GEORGIA

ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS

LOUISIANA

MARYLAND

MINNESOTA

MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI

IDAHO

NORTH CAROLINA

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NEW HAMPSHIRE

OHIO

SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA

TEXAS

TEXAS

TEXAS

TEXAS

TEXAS

TEXAS

UTAH

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA

WISCONSIN

MARYLAND

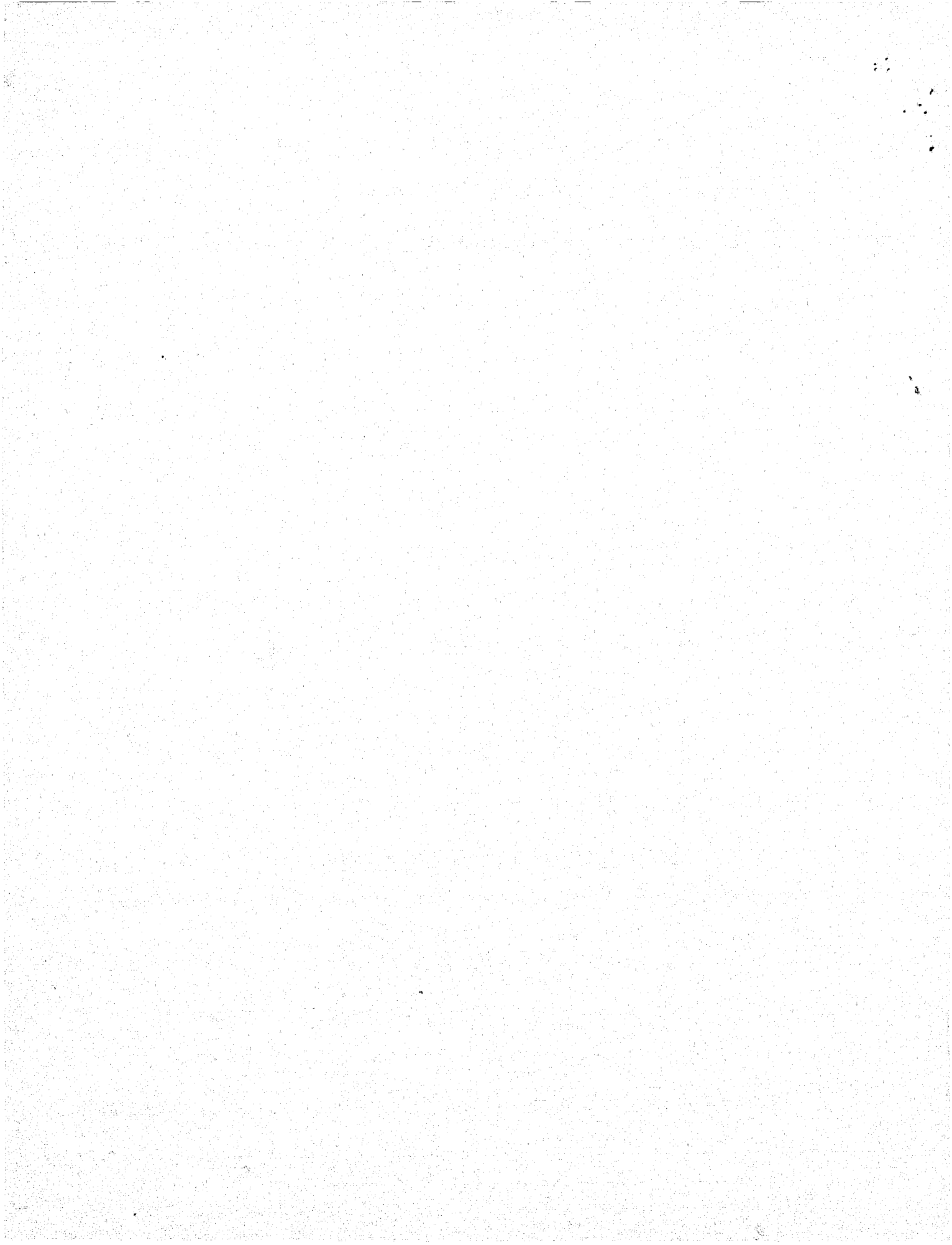
WEST VIRGINIA

NOTE: Four traces have been omitted because it was the same purchaser on the same date buying additional firearms. All involved purchases in Florida.

TOTAL FIREARMS SUBMITTED FOR TRACING STUDY - 300

INVALID TRACES

Traces submitted with error in serial number	(16)	(5%)
Traces involving retail dealer investigations	(10)	(3%)
Traces involving theft of firearm from retail dealer	(10)	(3%)
Traces involving investigations of obliterated serial number	(3)	(1%)
Traces involving same purchaser on same date with different firearm	(5)	(2%)
Total valid traces where first retail purchaser has been identified	256	





NCJRS

Public Affairs Office

AUG 18 1976

ATF Study Shows Handguns Obtained Through Theft and Deception

**ACQUISITIONS** 76-55

Advance for use at 10:00 a.m. EST, Wed., April 14, 1976

WASHINGTON -- A six-month pilot study of a special group of crime associated handguns traced throughout their life history by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms indicates a far greater number in this category was stolen or obtained by false and devious means than previous studies showed.

ATF Director Rex D. Davis reported today that the study of 300 handguns picked from those submitted by various police agencies to the Bureau's National Firearms Tracing Center for investigational tracing showed that 66, or 22%, were stolen, although most of them never were reported stolen.

The 300 were selected at random from a subgrouping of handguns manufactured after Jan. 1, 1972, which had moved interstate, and which previously had been traced to their first retail seller.



Project 300 was the first study of its kind ever attempted. To accomplish it, ATF agents in all 50 states went into the field over a six-month period to painstakingly track down each owner of a firearm in the sample and then each previous owner until the complete life history of each gun was compiled.

Of the 300 handguns, all submitted to the Bureau for investigational tracing, 197 were determined to have actually been involved in a crime. Davis said this indicates that two-thirds of the traceable handguns submitted to the Bureau are crime handguns.

Of the 300 sample, 66 or 22%, were stolen guns. Davis noted that this bears out the Bureau's contention that one of the criminal's favorite tools is a stolen gun.

Project Identification, another recent, but less in-depth ATF study of handguns submitted to the Bureau for tracing by police departments in 16 selected cities, showed 6% of the sample of 10,617 handguns was reported stolen and recorded in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). If a handgun had been identified previously as stolen and recorded on the NCIC, it was not included in the Project 300 sample.

Thus, Davis said, the revelation that 66 of the 300 were stolen, and that 52 of these were not reported to the police, indicates an incidence of the use of stolen guns in crime of alarming proportions.

The theft record of the 300 sample included 10 which the first retail dealers said were stolen from them. Forty-three were stolen from the 256 first retail owners; 7 from the 127 secondary owners, and 6 from 74 last owners.

Where Project I tracing ended with the first retail sale, Project 300 picked up at that point and where possible carried the trace throughout its life history.

Davis said the exhaustive Project 300 study was performed so that the Bureau could determine through a statistical sample how handguns entered criminal channels and their life history up to seizure or association with a crime. The Bureau's goal is to determine how criminals get their guns, Davis said, and then attempt to cut off these sources.

Davis said broad general findings of the 300 sample showed:

-- a disturbing number of handguns submitted for tracing had been stolen, and most of these stolen guns went unreported to police.

-- that there is a relationship, either through friendship or family, among those who passed the guns along their chain before an actual crime associated seizure.

-- that many of the first purchasers circumvented the Gun Control Law by using guile or deception to obtain their guns from legitimate federally licensed firearms dealers.

-- that a significant number of these 300 guns was associated with narcotics crimes.

-- that through the entire tracing procedure involving 256 handguns, 40 felons were found in the possession of one of the guns. Felons are forbidden by law to own or possess a firearm.

Davis said the large number of stolen guns in the sample supports the validity of the Bureau's National Firearms Security Program. This public information program, started last year, stresses the use of radio and television public service announcements as well as other media to bring the message of firearms security to the public.

The criteria for selection of a handgun for the sample in Project 300 was that it be manufactured after Jan. 1, 1972, when the ATF Tracing center began operation; that it was not recorded previously as stolen in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC); that it had been moved interstate; and that the gun had been traced previously to the first retail dealer.

During a nine-month period from October 1974 through June 1975, the Bureau's tracing center received from various sources 17,575 handguns for tracing. From this group, 11,810 were traced successfully, that is, they were traced to their first retail sale, at which point there are no further records kept on firearms.

It was determined that of the 11,810 handguns, 5,725 had moved interstate. It was from this group that the 300 sample was selected randomly by computer.

Eventually, the 300 was reduced to 256 because of the inability for various reasons to trace 44 guns beyond their arrival at the first retail dealer. Dealers reported 10 of these guns had been stolen.

Highlights of the 300-gun sample showed:

-- that 66 (22%) were stolen.

-- that 52 (79%) of the stolen guns were not reported stolen.

Of the 256 guns traced to the first retail owner:

-- 40 (16%) were obtained by persons who used fictitious or invalid identification.

Under the Gun Control Act of 1968, which is enforced by ATF, records must be kept through the first retail sale on all guns entering commerce. The guns must pass through a federally licensed firearms dealer and the purchaser must complete and sign an ATF Form 4473.

This firearms transaction form requires the purchaser to swear he or she is at least 21 years old, a resident of the state in which the gun is being bought, and that the purchaser is not a convicted felon, nor have a history of mental disorder, or alcohol or narcotics addiction.

The more than 158,000 gun dealers in the United States are required to request some identification from each buyer, but it is not incumbent on the dealer to ascertain the purchaser is who he claims to be.

The study showed that of the 256 first retail purchasers, 40 or 16%, used a fictitious or invalid identification to obtain a gun. Twenty-three used a Social Security card as identification, of which 8 were fictitious. Davis noted that because of a 1975 Bureau ruling, Social Security cards are no longer acceptable as identification.

Fifty, or 20% of the first retail purchasers, used or had possession of the gun in the commission of a crime.

The Bureau recently released the results of its Project Identification study during which crime handguns submitted from police departments in 16 selected cities were traced to the first retail sale. While some Project I guns were included in the 300, the sample was selected from the entire number of guns submitted to the bureau for tracing from all sources.

While the number of stolen guns in Project 300 was considerably higher than the 6% in Project I, the number of so-called Saturday Night Specials was about the same. The 300 sample turned out to have 88, or 29%, Saturday Night Specials, while 30% of Project I guns was Saturday Night Specials.

Davis noted that 197 of the 300 sample guns were used or seized in street crimes. Of the 256 which were traceable from the first retail sale, 127 were traced to a second sale, and then 74 were traced to a third sale. Only 13 were traced to more than three sales.

Davis said that not only did 65 of the first 256 retail purchasers have felony or criminal records, but that 53 of the 127 second owners were either a relative or friend of the first purchaser.

Of the 127 second owners, 21 were felons or had a criminal arrest record. Of the 74 guns traced to a third owner, 36 were felons or had a criminal arrest record.

Fifty of the 256 first retail purchasers were arrested with trace firearms in their possession. Of the 50 arrested, nine (18%) were felons and 14 (28%) used invalid identification to make firearms purchases.

Of 127 guns transferred from the first owner to a second owner, felons acquired nine (7%) of these guns, and 12 others (10%) went to persons with criminal records.

Thirty of the second owners were arrested with trace firearms in their possession. Half of these were felons or had a police record.

Seventy-four guns were tracked to a third or final owner. Almost half of these guns turned up in the hands of felons or persons with arrest records.

Fifty-four of 74 final owners were arrested with trace firearms in their possession. Of this number, 22 (41%) were felons, and 13 others (24%) had previous brushes with the law.

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**NCJRS**

**AUG 18 1976**

**PROJECT 300 STUDY**

**ATF FIREARMS TRACE TRACKING CHART**

**ACQUISITION**

Chart traces flow of 300 handguns from first retail dealer...to first purchaser...to second owner (or transferee)...to final owner.

300 handgun traces selected at random from a total of 11,810 firearms traced by ATF to first retail dealer, from October 1974 through June 1975.



300 HANDGUN TRACES

44 or 15%-unable to follow-up to first retail purchaser (10 stolen from dealer, 34 misc. other reasons)

66 or 22%-alleged to have been stolen from the owner

256 WERE TRACED TO THE FIRST RETAIL PURCHASER

25% of the purchasers had felony or prior criminal arrest record

17% of the handguns were stolen from the first retail purchaser

24% of the purchasers bought more than 1 firearm at time of sale

13% of the handguns could not be followed up further

20% of the purchasers were arrested with the weapon thereby ending the trace

2% of the handguns were lost by the first retail purchaser

16% of the purchasers used invalid identification

6% of the purchasers were transient military

127 OF THE 256 HANDGUNS WERE TRACED TO A SECOND PURCHASER

42% of these purchasers were either a relative or friend of the first retail purchaser

49% of the handguns could not be followed up

24% of the purchasers were arrested with the handgun thereby ending the trace

6% of the handguns were stolen from the second purchaser

17% of the purchasers had felony or prior criminal arrest record

5% of the handguns were followed to a second purchaser who was also the last owner, however, reason for trace is unknown or traced for investigative purposes only thereby ending the trace

1% of the handguns were lost by the second purchaser

(continued)

21 OF THE 127 HANDGUNS  
WERE TRACED TO  
A LAST OWNER

53 Handguns were traced from recovery  
of the weapon by police backwards  
therefore followed up to a last  
owner.

74 LAST OWNERS  
IDENTIFIED

73% of the purchasers were  
arrested with the handgun  
49% of the purchasers or  
possessors had felony or  
prior criminal arrest  
record

18% of the handguns were used  
or possessed in a narcotic  
violation

8% of the handguns were stolen  
from the last owner

181 or 60% of the 300  
traces could not be  
completely traced-i.e.  
at least one transferee  
could never be located  
to complete the history  
of the handgun.

(end)

**END**