



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORMER KITSAP COUNTY MAN SENTENCED FOR SELLING GUNS TO FELON

Sporting Goods Store Assistant Manager Knew Purchaser was Prohibited from Possessing Firearm

JONATHAN R. LEFLER, 24, formerly of Kitsap County, Washington, was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in Tacoma to time served and three years of supervised release for Transfer of a Firearm to a Prohibited Person. LEFLER, who now resides in Wyoming, was the Assistant Manager of Big 5 Sporting Goods stores in Silverdale and Port Orchard, Washington when the illegal transfers occurred in 2006. At sentencing today U.S. District Judge Ronald B. Leighton called LEFLER's sales of five guns to a known felon the type of crime where "tragic consequences can result when people ignore their responsibilities in this system." Judge Leighton used the "D.C. Sniper" case as an example of what can happen when felons or other prohibited persons get hold of firearms that they should not have.

According to records filed in the case, LEFLER sold five firearms to his friend and former high school classmate Kevin Colby, even though he knew Colby was prohibited from owning them because of a prior felony conviction for Possession of Stolen Property. LEFLER sold Colby four rifles and a shotgun. LEFLER conspired with Colby to put false names on the background check paperwork, so that the sales would go through. Colby sold one of the guns to someone who could legally possess it, and the rest were seized by ATF from a gun safe in Colby's parents' home.

In asking for three years of supervised release as well as two months in prison, prosecutors noted LEFLER's special responsibility to obey and help enforce gun laws. "As an assistant manager of Federal Firearms Licensee Big 5, Mr. Lefler was entrusted with the important duty of making sure felons were weeded out from customers seeking to buy guns. Instead, he shirked that responsibility and then lied about it to an ATF agent when confronted," Assistant United States Attorney Gregory A. Gruber wrote in his sentencing memo. In sentencing LEFLER to time served, Judge Leighton agreed with the government that this was "a serious offense." But he also noted the absence of any criminal convictions in LEFLER's history and that LEFLER seemed truly remorseful and had learned his lesson; the guns were never fired and were recovered without incident by the ATF.

LEFLER was prosecuted as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Unveiled by President George W. Bush in May 2001, Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), is a comprehensive and strategic approach to gun law enforcement. PSN is a nationwide commitment to reduce gun crime in America by networking both new and existing local programs that target gun crime and then providing them with the resources and tools they need to succeed. Implementation at the local level - in this case, in Kitsap County-- has fostered close partnerships between federal, state and local prosecutors and law enforcement.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF). The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Gregory A. Gruber.

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