



SHOT Show 2012

Detecting & Avoiding Illegal Straw Purchases

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What is a “Straw Purchase”?

- The illegal purchase of a firearm by one person on behalf of another
- “Actual buyer” selects firearm, pays for firearm, takes custody of firearm, etc.
- “Straw Purchaser” completes paperwork
- Actual buyer may or may not be prohibited
- May be firearms trafficking or single purchase
- Gifts are NOT straw purchases



The Law

- 18 U.S.C. § 2 – Aiding & Abetting
- 18 U.S.C. § 371 – Conspiracy
- 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6) – Deceiving Statement
- 18 U.S.C. § 924(a)(1)(A) – False Statement
- 18 U.S.C. § 924(a)(3) – FFL False Statement
- 27 C.F.R. 478.128 – False Statement



Common Indicators

- Bulk purchases or repetitive purchases of same or similar firearms, especially “non-collectibles”
- Structuring purchases to avoid MS reporting
- Purchase made with new identification
- No previous purchases but now frequent buying
- No haggling or questions on price
- Paying with large amount of cash



Common Indicators

- Arriving in car with out-of-state license plate
- Attempts to conceal conversation from FFL
- “Scouting” of firearm by person with purchaser
- Taking/sending cell phone photos of firearms
- Talking on telephone while looking at firearms
- Avoids engaging in conversation with FFL or is evasive when asked questions



Common Indicators

- Reluctance of apparent buyer to complete paperwork
- Attempted purchase of firearm from recent denial
- Purchaser has little or no knowledge about firearms
- Purpose inconsistent with firearm purchased
 - Deer hunting with .22-caliber
- Customer inconsistent with firearm purchased
 - Small-framed person buys large pistol
 - Person with no apparent income buys expensive rifle



What can you do?

- Know your customers
- Ask questions
- Trust your instincts
- Maintain complete records
- Report suspected straw purchasers
- Willful blindness is not an excuse



Remember...

Know your customers!

Ask questions!

Trust your instincts!



Questions?

www.ATF.gov

1-800-ATF-GUNS

(1-800-283-4867)