



# The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

# Crime Gun Trace Analysis Report: The Illegal Youth Firearms Market in Washington<sup>DC</sup>

February 1999

Department of the Treasury  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms





UNDER SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, DC 20226

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*Make no mistake: Gun traffickers are funneling guns to lawless youth. We know how they operate, and we intend to shut them down . . .*

President Clinton, August 8, 1997.

In July 1996, President Clinton announced the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII). The initiative brings together federal, state, and local law enforcement officials to improve information about the illegal sources of guns recovered from juveniles and adult criminals, and to use that information to strengthen enforcement of the nation's firearms laws. One year later, in August 1997, the Department of the Treasury and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) released the first YCGII report, analyzing crime gun trace information on guns recovered in 17 cities. Upon release of the one year report, President Clinton announced the expansion of YCGII to 10 additional cities.

The attached report, *Crime Gun Trace Analysis Reports: The Illegal Youth Firearms Market in 27 Communities* (the *Trace Reports*), provides ATF crime gun analysis for a second year.

YCGII reflects the broad consensus in our country that juveniles should not have illegal access to firearms, and that certain people should never have access to guns. Through YCGII, ATF is addressing a fundamental problem in achieving those goals: insufficient information about how minors and criminals illegally acquire guns has impeded efforts to investigate and arrest illegal suppliers of firearms.

Through YCGII, ATF has successfully worked with police departments to produce the facts needed to better understand the illegal gun market nationally and in particular cities. In 1995, the year before YCGII commenced, ATF's National Tracing Center traced almost 77,000 crime guns in response to law enforcement requests. In 1998, the NTC traced over 197,000 crime guns, 39 percent of them from the 27 YCGII cities where law enforcement agencies are committed to comprehensive tracing and whose traces are analyzed in the attached report.

The annual *Trace Reports* provide information that has changed the common understanding of how minors and criminals illegally obtain firearms. When YCGII began, many law enforcement officials believed most juvenile and youth offenders stole their crime guns, and that attacking the illegal gun market therefore was not a useful law enforcement strategy. Through YCGII's comprehensive tracing and the *Trace Reports* analyses of the "time-to-crime" of guns recovered by law enforcement, ATF and police departments have shown that illegal gun market activity is an important element of crime gun acquisition by juveniles and youth.

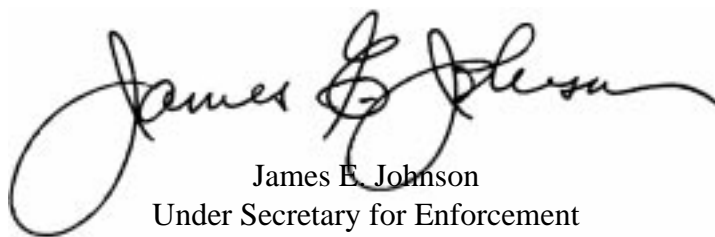
When YCGII began, many believed that illegal gun trafficking was primarily an interstate problem. Through the *Trace Reports*, ATF has shown that many crime guns were originally sold by Federally licensed firearms dealers in the state in which the city is located. When YCGII began, variations in the local crime gun supply were invisible. Through the *Trace Reports*, ATF has identified for local authorities the kinds of guns most frequently recovered from their local juveniles and criminals, establishing that there are local "crime guns of choice" the illegal sources of which can be targeted.

Through YCGII and its annual *Trace Reports*, ATF is now systematically sharing the strategic knowledge gained from crime gun tracing with its state and local law enforcement partners. For the individual city, these reports provide much needed knowledge. Among other things, this year's *Trace Reports* tell each of the 27 communities what proportion of its crime guns are recovered from juveniles, youth and adults; whether its crime guns are principally from within or without the state, and identifies the top source states; what kinds of guns are used; and what guns are moving particularly quickly from retail suppliers into the hands of juveniles and criminals, and are therefore more likely to have been illegally trafficked.

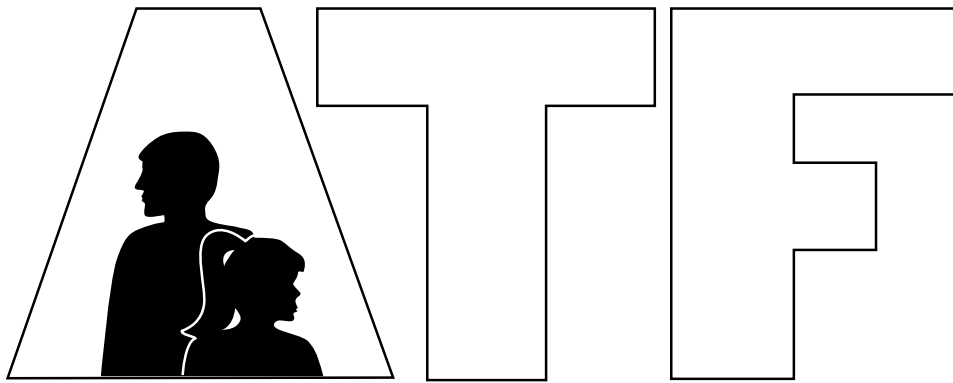
More and more state and local law enforcement agencies are recognizing that this type of strategic trace analysis, combined with specific investigative information available to local law enforcement authorities from ATF, can contribute significantly to successful investigations of illegal gun traffickers. Before YCGII, no police departments had formally committed to tracing all recovered crime guns. Now because of YCGII, 27 departments have made this commitment, and many more departments have expressed an interest in doing so. The *Trace Reports* lists a growing number of new and existing law enforcement partnerships throughout the country using crime gun trace information in investigations and in planning enforcement strategy. In 1998, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), which has assisted many departments in learning about the benefits of increased tracing, passed a resolution recommending the strategy of comprehensive crime gun tracing to support gun trafficking investigations for all its members.

Over the next year, we will continue to build Federal-local firearms enforcement partnerships, and to expand comprehensive crime gun tracing to fully support these partnerships and provide the information needed to make sound firearms policy decisions.

If we do these things, we can more effectively target the criminal behind the criminal — the illegal gun trafficker — and reduce violent crime across our nation. I commend ATF and its Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners for making YCGII an outstanding example of smarter, tougher law enforcement.



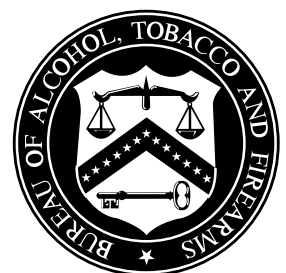
James E. Johnson  
Under Secretary for Enforcement



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Department of the Treasury  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms



# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Atlanta, Georgia

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## Forward by the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms

This is the second year that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) has published a report on the results of crime gun traces conducted by ATF's National Tracing Center at the request of Federal, State and local law enforcement officials participating in the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII). Publication of this Report serves three of ATF's critical missions: vigorous investigation of illegal transfers of firearms; assisting State and local law enforcement agencies in enforcing their firearm laws; and informing the public.

The principle that good information is needed to make optimal decisions is universal in our contemporary world. This certainly holds true for Federal law enforcement. By developing innovative analytical techniques, using information technology, and establishing academic partnerships, ATF is continually improving available information about how juveniles, youth offenders, and other prohibited persons obtain firearms illegally. Through the YCGII Report's publication of uniform statistics about crime guns, ATF is providing Federal, State and local law enforcement officials with a common set of facts about illegal firearms trafficking in their communities that enforcement officials can use as a foundation for joint and well targeted enforcement operations.

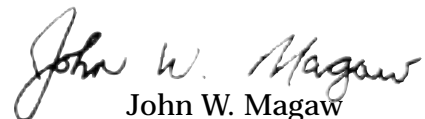
The first YCGII Report initiated the practice of age-differentiated reporting about recovered and traced firearms, providing a model for annual ATF reporting. Uniform, annual reporting of crime gun information for the city, State, and national levels is a multi-year endeavor. This year's Report includes the following improvements:

- Statistical information for an additional 10 cities
- Clarifications in most of the tables
- A new table on crime gun trace requests for firearms with obliterated serial numbers
- A description of the types of illegal transfers of firearms used by prohibited persons
- A section providing information for State and local law enforcement executives

ATF plans to further strengthen firearms enforcement by providing:

- Project LEAD on-line to all ATF offices for use by local joint firearms task forces
- Information about illegal traffickers to juveniles and youth and their trafficking patterns
- Reports on the frequency of crime gun purchases in multiple sales
- State and national level crime gun trace information
- Information on illegal transfers of used and stolen firearms
- Expansion of comprehensive crime gun tracing support to additional cities.

Vigorous enforcement of the laws against the illegal transfer of firearms will reduce armed and violent crime. ATF appreciates the growing collaboration with State and local law enforcement agencies to take advantage of the new enforcement opportunities provided by comprehensive crime gun tracing. Our children deserve our best efforts to stop illegal gun transfers and firearms traffickers.

  
John W. Magaw

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

### Introduction

This section describes the Initiative and this year's Report, and lists the participating communities.

**The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII).** Part of ATF's nationwide illegal firearms trafficking program, the YCGII is an evolving collaboration among Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies to reduce youth gun violence. The collaboration is strengthening law enforcement of existing Federal and State firearms laws by providing the most complete and systematic knowledge available of firearms recovered by law enforcement agencies. Participants are using that information to initiate law enforcement operations against criminals illegally transferring firearms to juveniles, to adult criminals and other prohibited persons. Specifically, the YCGII collaboration is:

- Instituting comprehensive crime gun tracing in participating police departments, and assisting the departments to automate crime gun tracing;
- Using ATF's National Tracing Center to trace the firearms recovered by law enforcement officials and to enter that trace information into Project LEAD, an information system for illegal firearms trafficking data;
- Providing law enforcement officials access to investigative and analytical information about the nature and sources of crime guns recovered in their jurisdiction;
- Assisting in the development of criminal cases that enforce existing firearms laws and disrupt the illegal supply of firearms to juveniles and adult criminals;
- Using crime gun analysis to focus ATF's regulatory compliance activities in support of illegal trafficking prevention.

**The 1998 YCGII Report.** This Report provides general and detailed information about the findings derived from crime gun traces submitted by the 27 participating jurisdictions.

**Part 1** of this report begins by describing the *Terms Used in this Report* and the *Trace Analysis Provided in This Report*. Next, the Report presents *General Findings: Local Illegal Firearms Markets*, which are based on the trace information collected from all the program's jurisdictions, and describes the different *Methods of Illegal Transfer of Firearms to Juveniles and Other Prohibited Persons*. It then provides an explanation of different *Enforcement Opportunities for Preventing Trafficking in Firearms* as well as an *Update: Comprehensive Community Crime Gun Tracing*. The Report goes on to describe *Local Law Enforcement Initiatives* associated with the YCGII and *Future Developments* regarding ATF's efforts to enforce firearms laws and report crime gun trace information. Finally, Part I presents a new section which provides *Information for Law Enforcement Executives*.

**Part II** of this Report presents uniform statistical reports that provide an overview of the crime guns that law enforcement officials in each of the participating jurisdictions recovered and submitted for tracing. Each report includes:

- number of crime guns recovered;
- number of crime guns that can be associated with particular age groups;
- types of crime guns recovered;
- most frequently traced crime guns, by type, manufacturer, and caliber;

- crime types associated with firearms that law enforcement officials recover;
- number of crime gun traces resulting in a first seller or buyer being identified, or the reasons why the first transaction could not be identified;
- how quickly the most frequently traced crime guns move from first retail sale by Federally Licensed Firearms Dealer to law enforcement recovery;
- most frequent source states for traced crime guns;
- number of recovered crime guns with obliterated serial numbers (new table).

**The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative communities are:**

Atlanta, Georgia  
Baltimore, Maryland  
Birmingham, Alabama  
Boston, Massachusetts  
Bridgeport, Connecticut  
Chicago, Illinois  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Cleveland, Ohio  
Detroit, Michigan  
Gary, Indiana  
Houston, Texas  
Inglewood, California  
Jersey City, New Jersey  
Los Angeles, California  
Memphis, Tennessee  
Miami, Florida  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
New York City, New York  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Richmond, Virginia  
Salinas, California  
San Antonio, Texas  
Seattle, Washington  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Tucson, Arizona  
Washington, D.C.



# Part I

## Terms Used in the Report

### Crime Gun

For purposes of firearms tracing, a crime gun is any firearm that is illegally possessed, used in a crime, or suspected to have been used in a crime. Table E in each community report shows the crime types associated with crime gun trace requests.

### Firearm Trace

A firearm trace is the process of tracking a recovered crime gun's history from its source (manufacturer/importer) through the chain of distribution (wholesaler/retailer) to the individual who first purchases the firearm. Crime guns are traced by ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC). Because of the structure of Federal firearms regulation and recordkeeping requirements, it is generally not possible for the National Tracing Center to trace crime gun transfers beyond the first retail sale using firearm industry records. To further trace a crime gun's path, ATF must conduct an investigative trace, in which special agents investigate the subsequent chain of possession.

### Trace Request

Requests for firearm traces are submitted to the NTC by Federal, State and local law enforcement to solve individual crimes and acquire illegal trafficking information. Requests may be submitted by telephone, facsimile, mail, or as an electronic file through the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) or a law enforcement agency computer. ATF trace forms require a description of the firearm, the individuals possessing or associated with the firearm, the recovery location, and the underlying offense that brought the crime gun to the attention of law enforcement.

### Comprehensive Tracing

Comprehensive tracing by community, or comprehensive community tracing, involves the tracing of all recovered crime guns in a geographic area (e.g., town, county, metropolitan area, or State). Trace information is used to solve individual cases, to maximize the investi-

gative information available in Project LEAD for use in identifying potential illegal firearms traffickers, and to analyze crime gun trends and illegal trafficking patterns.

### Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL)

An FFL is any person, including a partnership, corporation, or business entity holding a valid license issued by ATF that allows them, or their employees, to "engage in the business" of dealing, manufacturing, importing, repairing, or pawnbrokering firearms. By law, all FFLs must keep records of their firearms transactions and forward all their records to ATF upon going out of business.

### ATF National Tracing Center (NTC)

The NTC works with law enforcement agencies, firearms manufacturers and FFLs to determine the manufacturing and initial sale history of firearms recovered by law enforcement officials in the United States or abroad. The NTC is also the repository for all FFL out-of-business records.

### Project LEAD

Project LEAD is ATF's information system designed to produce investigative leads concerning illegal firearms trafficking. The system compiles trace information resulting from trace requests in order to identify recurring trends and patterns that may indicate illegal trafficking. Project LEAD is an investigative tool provided to ATF field offices for use by local task forces.

### Crime Gun Analysis Branch (CGAB)

ATF's crime gun analysis unit, located at the National Tracing Center, analyzes firearms trafficking patterns, supports investigations, and is responsible for compiling this Report.

### Firearm Serial Number

The Gun Control Act of 1968 requires that a serial number be affixed to firearms manufactured or imported into the United States. This is the primary means of identifying a firearm and tracing it to the FFL that first sold it and to its first unlicensed purchaser.

### **Obliterated Serial Number**

Some individuals attempt to obliterate the firearm serial number after they have purchased a firearm. ATF and local law enforcement agencies can restore the serial numbers of most crime guns that are recovered with obliterated or partially obliterated serial numbers. Obliteration of a serial number is a Federal crime, as is possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number.

### **Firearm Type**

The NTC categorizes firearms into a number of types, including semiautomatic pistols, revolvers, shotguns, rifles, machine guns, and unknown types. Firearms are usually described by identifying the firearm type, manufacturer, and caliber. Together with the serial number, this information is needed to accurately trace a firearm.

### **Purchaser**

A firearm trace seeks to identify the FFL that first sold the crime gun and the first individual who purchased the firearm. This information can assist law enforcement officials in investigations and in understanding the sources of illegal trafficking in firearms.

### **Straw Purchaser**

A straw purchaser is a person illegally purchasing a firearm for another person, for instance for a juvenile or adult felon.

### **Possessor**

The possessor is the individual found in possession of the crime gun.

### **Time-to-Crime**

Time-to-crime is the time between the initial retail sale of a firearm by an FFL and its recovery as a crime gun, or the submission of a trace request. This measure can be an important indicator of illegal firearm trafficking.

### **Source State**

This is the State in which the FFL that first sold the crime gun at retail is located. The source State can only be determined if a trace is initiated and identifies the FFL that sold the firearm.

### **Juvenile, Youth, and Adult Age Categories**

This Report provides Tables that present information by five age categories: juveniles (age 17 and under), youth (ages 18 to 24), and adult (age 25 and over), age unknown, and all categories combined.

## Trace Analysis Provided in This Report

This section briefly discusses the nature and uses of the trace analysis provided in this Report.

**Crime gun trace information.** This Report is based on 76,260 crime gun trace requests. Trace requests themselves include, when completely filled out by the submitting jurisdiction, information on the firearm type (semiautomatic pistol, revolver, etc.), the manufacturer and caliber of the recovered crime gun, the location where the crime gun was recovered, and the date of birth of the possessor of the crime gun. Crime gun traces that identify a retail transaction by Federal firearms licensees (FFL) permit the identification of the FFL that first sold the gun at retail and the source State of the firearm, and permit ATF to query the FFL regarding the first retail purchaser of the firearm. Crime gun traces that identify the first retail purchaser of the crime gun provide information on that first purchaser and permit calculation of a time-to-crime for the crime gun.

**Varying availability of crime gun trace data.** Certain kinds of information are available for each of these trace requests, while other kinds of information are available only for some trace requests. Most trace requests include the firearm type and manufacturer, but not all trace requests include the age of the crime gun's possessor. Not all trace requests result in the identification of an FFL. Even when an FFL is identified, the trace may not disclose information on the first retail purchaser. Therefore, different analyses in this Report are based on different numbers of crime guns. For a given jurisdiction, for instance, information on firearm type is essentially complete. Age of possessor information is less complete, and so analyses including possessor age will be based on a smaller number of crime guns. Time-to-crime information is still less complete, so analyses of, for instance, time-to-crime by age of possessor will be based on a still smaller number of crime guns.

**The implementation of comprehensive tracing.** In most police jurisdictions in the United States, crime gun trace requests have traditionally been made only in order to help law enforcement agencies solve specific crimes. The National Tracing Center's Firearms Tracing System (FTS) continues to serve this purpose. However, the 27 jurisdictions participating in YCGII, however, are committed to the goal of tracing all recovered crime guns, which allows for the support of trafficking enforcement and for new analyses of the criminal use of firearms and of trafficking patterns. Each of the participating jurisdictions has made major progress toward establishing and maintaining a program of comprehensive tracing. In some jurisdictions, the implementation of comprehensive tracing was not complete during the entire time period covered in this report. For instance, between August 1, 1997 and July 31, 1998, the FTS recorded 2,291 trace requests originating in Los Angeles. Officials familiar with Los Angeles report that this number is an undercount of the actual number of recovered crime guns, due to the fact that comprehensive tracing was implemented part way through this period. This Report still provides analyses for Los Angeles and certain other jurisdictions in a similar position because the crime gun trace requests submitted during this period are helpful in supporting law enforcement operations and examining trafficking patterns.

**The analyses in this Report.** *Site-specific analyses.* Most analyses in this report are site-specific: for example, information on the types of crime guns recovered; on the age of possessors; on time-to-crime for the top ten crime guns recovered from juveniles, youth, and adults. A standard package of such analyses is provided for each of the 27 participating sites in Part II of this Report.

*Limitations on combined analyses.* The YCGII was not designed to provide a representative sample of the United States, or even of large urban jurisdictions. It clearly does not represent such a sample. Chicago, for instance, contributes 16,222, or about 21 percent, of the trace requests from all 27 jurisdictions. Because the total YCGII trace pool is not a representative national sample, certain analyses of the total pool are not appropriate. For example, in most of the sites, including Chicago, the leading source state for crime guns (based on traces providing source state information) is the State in which the site is located. The preponderance of traces from Chicago would therefore skew a combined analyses of the source state of crime guns toward Illinois. Other important dimensions, such as the types and manufacturers of most frequently recovered crime guns, vary substantially from site to site, suggesting that aggregate analysis would be misleading.

*Selected combined analyses.* Certain combined analyses are presented in this Report. For example, while the proportion of traces on which the possessor's age is known varies somewhat by jurisdiction, the distribution by possessor's age (where it is known) is fairly similar across all 27 jurisdictions. Thus, this Report describes the age distribution for traces from all 27 jurisdictions (see Figure 1). It also reports, for all 76,260 trace requests, on the proportion resulting in the identification of a first purchaser. For some categories, like crime guns with obliterated serial numbers, there appears to be complete and comprehensive data from some, but not all, YCGII jurisdictions. This Report presents the combined results for those jurisdictions with complete information as illustrative of the types of analyses that can be produced (see Figure 3).

**The significance of time-to-crime.** Time-to-crime is the time from initial retail sale of a firearm by an FFL to that firearm's recovery by law enforcement or the submission of a trace request. A short time-to-crime is considered an indicator of potential firearms trafficking. For investigative purposes, ATF presently considers a short time-to-crime to be three years or less. Because identifying information, such as the address of the original purchaser, is more likely still to be accurate and useful, traces of firearms with short time-to-crime can offer substantial investigative insight. However, time-to-crime can be an imperfect indicator of firearms trafficking. Newly purchased firearms can be stolen, for example; such a crime gun, if traced soon after the theft, would show a short time-to-crime. Similarly, older firearms can be sold used through FFLs or by private sellers and still be part of an illegal firearms trafficking enterprise. Traces of such firearms would not show short time-to-crime.

*Time to crime calculations.* The time-to-crime calculations in this Report are complicated by two ATF tracing practices. During the period covered in this Report, ATF did not initiate queries of manufacturers regarding traces of firearms manufactured before 1990 unless such an inquiry was specifically requested by a law enforcement management official (such a request might be made, for example, as part of the investigation of a particularly violent crime). However, the NTC queries its on-site Out-Of-Business records (records archived with the NTC by out-of-business FFLs) as a first step in conducting all traces. Some queries of the Out-Of-Business records produced full trace information on firearms manufactured before 1990. Thus, for the trace requests analyzed in this Report, time-to-crime can be calculated for some, but not all, trace requests associated with firearms sold before 1990. (Due to an increase in resources, the NTC is now able to initiate traces on all firearms manufactured prior to 1985.)

**Law enforcement uses of crime gun trace data.** This Report does not specifically identify any FFLs or first purchasers to whom crime guns have been traced. Investigations incorporating such law enforcement-sensitive trace information are conducted by ATF, or by State and local law enforcement agencies in conjunction with ATF. Using FFL and first purchaser information combined with other

investigative information and trace analysis, State and local law enforcement agencies can work with ATF in focusing enforcement efforts on the most active traffickers in their local illegal markets. These departments can also focus on traffickers contributing to particular local violent crime problems, such as youth firearms violence, violent drug groups, and other issues of local concern.

## General Findings: Local Illegal Firearms Markets

These General Findings are based on trace information from the participating jurisdictions. These include 22 of the 67 cities in the United States with a population of 250,000 or larger, and five smaller jurisdictions. This is the largest collection of comprehensive, community-based information available on recovered crime guns. The National Tracing Center is not providing tables that aggregate and summarize all the information provided in Part II for each individual community. This is because, notwithstanding the large number of traces, the 27 communities combined may not comprise a statistical sample for purposes of national analysis. Nevertheless, some useful conclusions can be drawn.

**Crime guns recovered from juveniles (ages 17 and under) account for 11.3 percent of the crime guns submitted to the National Tracing Center.\*** (Here, as in all other findings where the age of possessors is noted, counts and percentages can be calculated only for those trace requests submitted with possessor age information.) Figure 1 shows that the number of crime guns increases from about 300 for juveniles aged 14 to about 1300

for individuals aged 17. Crime guns were recovered more frequently from individuals aged 16 and 17 than from individuals of any age older than 26.

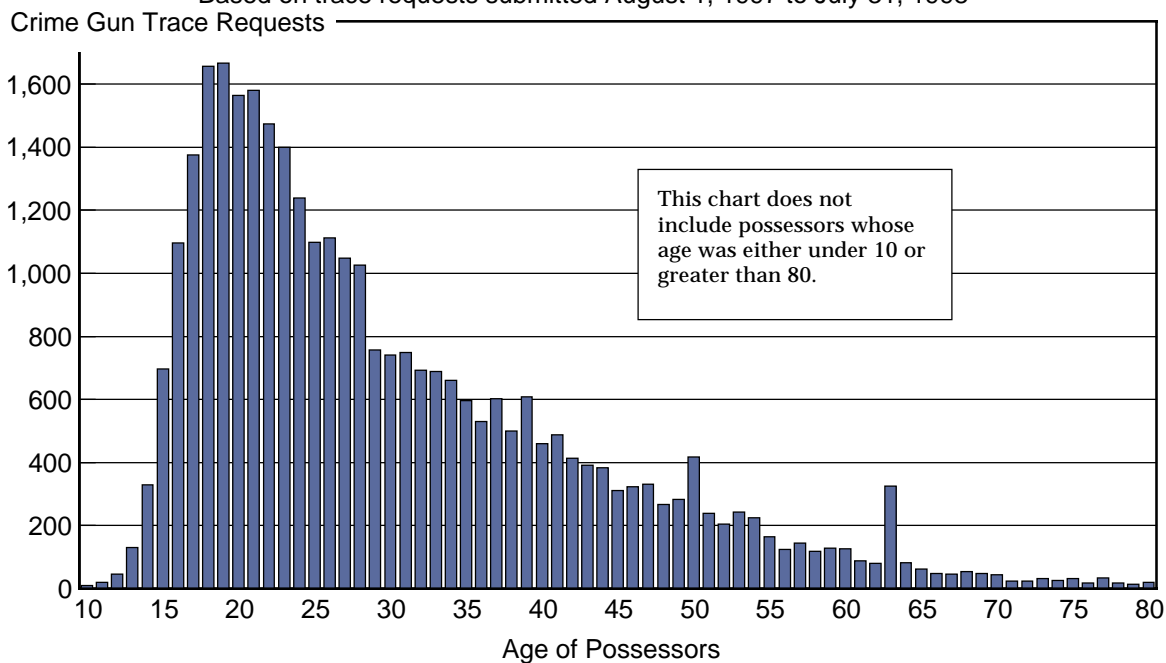
**Crime guns recovered from youth (ages 18 to 24) constitute 32.4 percent of all trace requests. There are more crime guns recovered from this seven-year age group-  
ing than any other seven-year age group-**

\* Figures of recoveries by age group sum to 99.9 percent due to rounding. A discussion of rounding is included in the Technical Notes at the end of Part II.

Figure 1

### Age of Crime Gun Possessors

Based on trace requests submitted August 1, 1997 to July 31, 1998



**ing in the juvenile or adult categories.**

Figure 1 shows that across all age groups, the most frequent age of crime gun possession is 19. The second most frequent age is 18.

**Crime guns recovered from adults (ages 25 and over) constitute 56.3 percent of all trace requests.** While the broad age range included in the adult category (from ages 25 to 96 years), in contrast to the juvenile (17 years and younger) and youth (18 to 24 years) categories, essentially ensured this result, at no age older than 31 were more crime guns recovered than from 15 year olds, and more crime guns were received from 14 year olds than from any age older than 50.

**8.1 of every ten crime guns traced were handguns.** Handguns were the most prevalent type of crime guns recovered across all age groups.

**Of handguns, semiautomatic pistols clearly predominate, making up the top category of guns recovered in each city, and 52 percent of all trace requests.** Semi-automatic pistols were more prevalent in the juvenile (57.7 percent) and youth (60.2 percent) age groups than among the adults (46.6 percent).

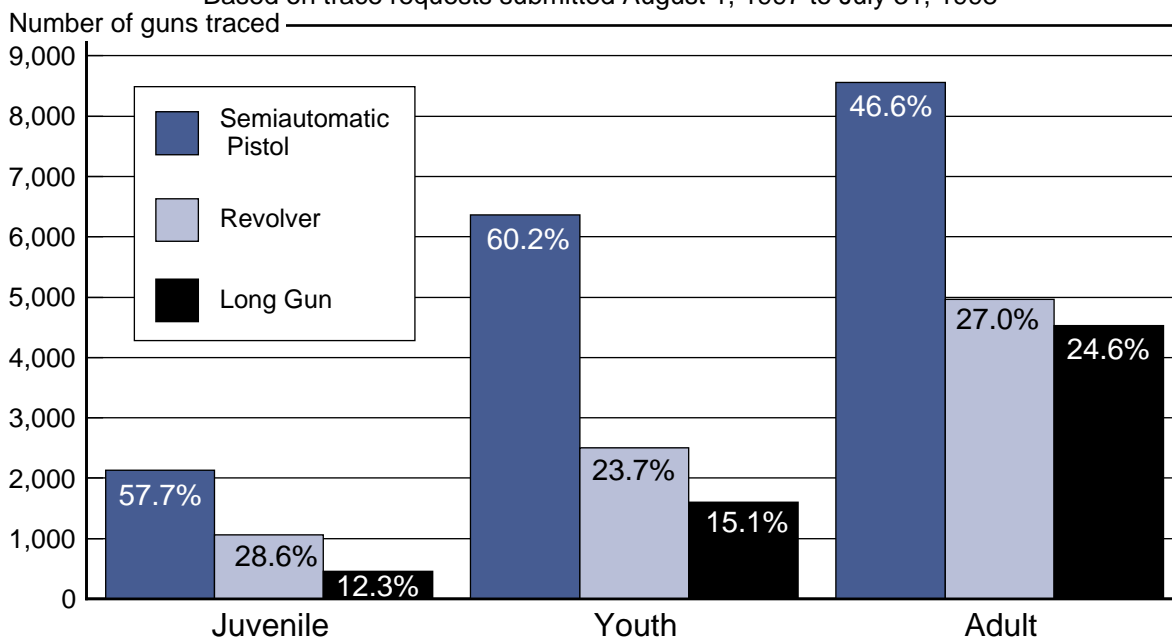
**Revolvers made up 27.6 percent of total crime gun trace requests.**

**Long guns, including shotguns and rifles, accounted for 18.8 percent of total trace requests.** While handguns were still the majority of adult crime guns, rifles and shotguns combined (24.6 percent) were about as prevalent among adults as revolvers (27 percent).

Figure 2

**Major Gun Types by Possessor Age Group**

Based on trace requests submitted August 1, 1997 to July 31, 1998





**While findings about the types of firearms recovered are similar across sites, there are also some city-specific variations.**

Atlanta and Houston had the largest percentage of semiautomatic pistols. Detroit had the largest percentage of revolvers, though semiautomatic pistols still dominated crime gun trace requests from that city. The prevalence of long guns was higher in San Antonio, Minneapolis, Salinas, and Milwaukee than in other cities.

**Crime guns are concentrated among a relatively few makes and calibers of firearms, particularly for crime guns recovered from juveniles and youth.** The top 10 most frequently traced types of crime guns, by manufacturer and caliber, represent a disproportionately large share of the total number of recovered firearms. Overall, the top 10 crime guns by manufacturer, type and caliber account for 24.6 percent of trace requests. Guns recovered from juveniles are slightly more concentrated, with the top 10 types of recovered firearms making up 28.3 percent of trace requests. The proportion of crime guns represented by the top 10 most frequently traced firearms diminishes slightly with increased possessor age, until it reaches a level of 23.1 percent among adult traces. The particular mix of firearms that dominates among crime guns changes from city to city, and is an important attribute of city-specific illegal firearms markets.

**In general, the State in which the community is located is the largest single source of its traced crime guns.** (A source State can only be identified in cases where a trace results in the identification of an FFL or retail purchaser.) In 21 of the 27 sites, the State itself supplies a *majority* of traced crime guns. In an additional four of the 27—Boston, Detroit, New York, and St. Louis—the State supplied a *plurality*. (A plurality indicates the State itself supplies more crime guns than any other single source State, while the com-

ination of all other States supplies more than half of the traced crime guns.) Jersey City was the only city in which the State itself was not the leading source State. Only 14 percent of traced crime guns recovered in Jersey City were first sold at retail in New Jersey. Crime guns recovered in Washington, D.C., which severely limits retail firearms sales, were from outside of the city.

**Many recovered firearms are rapidly diverted from first retail sales at Federally licensed gun dealers to an illegal market that supplies juveniles, youth, and adults.**

This is indicated by the proportion of guns recovered by law enforcement officials that are new, that is, bought less than three years before recovery by enforcement officials. Experienced trafficking investigators have found that recovery of crime guns within three years is a significant trafficking indicator. New guns in juvenile or criminal hands signal direct diversion, by illegal firearms trafficking—for instance through straw purchases or off the book sales by corrupt FFLs. Of the crime guns submitted for tracing, ATF estimates that new crime guns comprise between 25 percent and 36 percent of the firearms recovered from juveniles, between 32 percent and 49 percent of the firearms recovered from youth, and between 27 percent and 40 percent of the firearms recovered from adults. (The method for arriving at these estimates is explained in the Technical Notes included at the end of Part II.)

**The obliteration of firearm serial numbers is now a measurable as well as a significant problem.** For the first time, reports of crime guns with obliterated serial numbers have been included for each participating city. Both the obliteration of a serial number and the possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number are Federal crimes. The recovery of a firearm with an obliterated serial number is also an indicator of illegal

firearms trafficking, since the intentional obliteration of a serial number is intended to make it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify the last licensed seller and first unlicensed purchaser of the firearm.

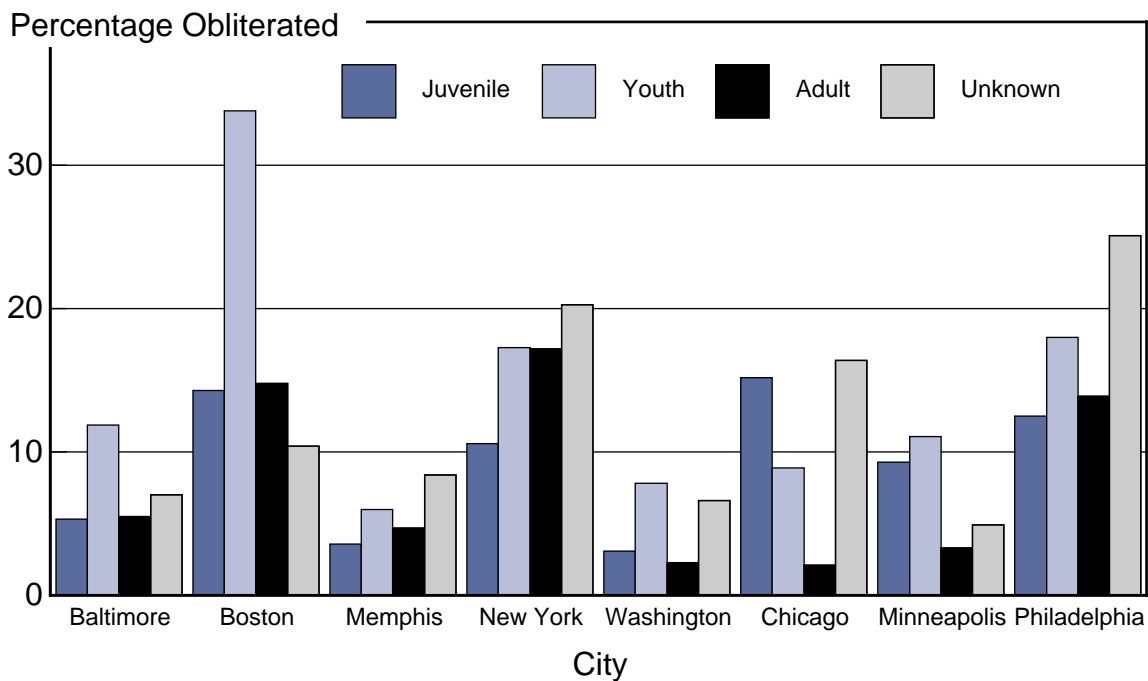
**For eight cities where complete data are available, an average of 11.4 percent of handguns traced as crime guns have obliterated serial numbers.** ATF has begun to work closely with police departments to encourage them to restore the serial numbers

on and submit trace requests for all of these guns. Only partial reporting of crime guns with obliterated serial numbers was possible due to the newness of this initiative. Reporting is comprehensive for eight cities: Chicago, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Memphis, Washington, New York, Baltimore, and Boston. Preliminary analysis for these cities indicates that handguns traced with obliterated serial numbers are disproportionately semiautomatic pistols in the relatively high-powered 9mm and .380 calibers.

Figure 3

### Percentage of Semiautomatic Pistols with Obliterated Serial Numbers by Age Group for Selected Cities

Based on trace requests submitted August 1, 1997 to July 31, 1998



## Methods of Illegal Transfer of Firearms to Juveniles and Other Prohibited Persons

Since 1996, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) has made the prevention of illegal firearms trafficking an operational priority, in combination with deterring and incarcerating armed criminals. During that time, in cooperation with State and local authorities, ATF has been developing a more precise picture of the structure of the illegal firearms market that supplies unauthorized juveniles, criminals and other prohibited persons.

**Common view: two methods.** The common view had been that there are two primary sources of illegally supplied firearms— old guns that are stolen and new guns that are trafficked. Further, a common view had been that trafficking occurs in large volume and primarily across state lines, and that, by contrast, theft of firearms is virtually always committed by individual juveniles and felons to acquire illegal firearms for their own personal use.

**Revised view: multiple sources.** Through crime gun tracing, trace analysis, and investigative work, ATF has learned that this picture is oversimplified. ATF has found that there are multiple illegal sources of firearms that law enforcement must address. Successful targeting of illegal firearms markets requires a combination of crime gun tracing, trace analysis, and more traditional criminal intelligence (confidential informants, debriefing arrestees, cooperating offenders, conditioned plea bargains, etc.). Effective local, State and Federal efforts to disrupt illegal firearms markets must recognize the complexity of illegal firearms trafficking, and formulate combined strategies to address its discrete components. These components encompass:

### 1. Trafficking in *new* firearms, interstate and intrastate, including by —

- Licensed firearm dealers, including pawn-brokers
- Large scale straw purchasers or straw purchasing rings
- Small scale straw purchasers, e.g. buying one or a few guns

### 2. Trafficking in *used* firearms, interstate and intrastate, including by —

- Licensed firearm dealers, including pawn-brokers
- Large scale straw purchasers or straw purchasing rings
- Small scale straw purchasers, e.g. buying one or a few guns
- Private sellers, including non-Federal firearms licensee sellers at gun shows and flea markets, or through want ads, gun

magazines, the Internet, and personal associations

- Bartering and trading within criminal networks

### 3. Trafficking in new and used *stolen* firearms, involving —

- Licensed gun dealer theft, including pawn-broker theft
- Organized fencing of stolen guns
- Common carrier theft
- Household and automobile theft
- Bartering and trading within criminal networks
- Manufacturer theft

### 4. *Not* trafficking —

- Individual thefts by adult and juvenile criminals for their own purposes

## Enforcement Opportunities For Preventing Trafficking In Firearms

This section briefly reviews the sources of information available to law enforcement officials to obtain insight into and mount law enforcement against different portions of the illegal firearms market.

### 1. Trafficking in *new* firearms, interstate and intrastate.

Some crime guns move rapidly from first retail sale into the hands of juveniles and older felons. Where this is true, ATF crime gun trace information, which relies on transaction records required by Federal law to be maintained by Federally licensed firearms dealers (FFL), can be particularly useful. Information such as who was the first retail purchaser of the crime guns, their place of residence, other crime guns they may have purchased, and related facts, is more likely to be available and useful when a crime gun is relatively new. Project LEAD, ATF's crime gun trafficking information, facilitates law enforcement access to this investigative information.

### 2. Trafficking in *used* firearms, interstate and intrastate.

Not all trafficked crime guns are trafficked close to the time of their first retail sale. Used firearms, obtained from both FFLs and private sellers, are also trafficked. ATF investigative experience suggests that illegal trafficking of used firearms is a significant source of crime guns, and that used firearms trafficked to juveniles and adult criminals are likely to be older firearms. It can be more difficult to identify an illegal source for a used crime gun. Although FFLs maintain transaction records on used as well as new firearms, a National Tracing Center (NTC) trace generally proceeds only to the point of first retail sale; thus, the trace of a used crime gun will not identify subsequent—including the most recent—transactions through an FFL. Also, in addition to being sold by FFLs, used firearms are also sold by private sellers not required by Federal law to maintain records of firearms transactions.

Despite the difficulties, law enforcement officials can also target illegal sources of used firearms. Some States maintain transaction information applying to the sale of used firearms, which may be used by local law enforcement officials in a way similar to NTC crime gun trace information. A variety of traditional law enforcement techniques—confidential informants, stings, undercover investigations, debriefing arrestees, cooperating offenders, condi-

tioned plea bargains—may also be used to identify traffickers in used firearms.

### 3. Trafficking in new and used *stolen* firearms.

Firearms may be stolen from a variety of sources, including FFL dealers, pawnbrokers, manufacturers, common carriers, buildings and residences, and vehicles. ATF investigative experience shows that they may subsequently be sold by individuals and groups specializing in firearms trafficking or by those fencing a variety of stolen goods. Depending on the type of theft involved, these firearms may range from the relatively new to the quite old. For instance, a crime gun trace with a rapid time-to-crime may be the result of theft from an individual shortly after the first retail purchase of a new firearm. In general, however, stolen firearms, especially those stolen from individuals and residences, tend to be older. It is not possible, based on NTC trace information in this Report, to distinguish between older crime guns that are trafficked used guns, and those guns that have been stolen. FFLs are required to report thefts to ATF, which maintains a database of the information. FFL theft information may also be reported to the National Criminal Information Center (NCIC), which is accessible to State and local police. If an individual firearms owner knows the serial number of the stolen firearm and reports the theft to the police, this information may also be reported to NCIC. These sources of information can be helpful to local authorities in identifying sources of stolen firearms used in crime. Generally, traditional investigative methods are required to address trafficking in stolen firearms.

### 4. Not trafficking: individual thefts by criminals and juveniles for their own purposes.

When individuals steal firearms for their own criminal purposes, no trafficking occurs. Measures against burglary and the criminal possession and use of firearms (including laws aimed at violent juveniles and adult felons) can help address such crimes. In addition, however, such stolen firearms are sometimes subsequently stolen again and then trafficked, or are subsequently sold (or traded) and trafficked, and thus can become vulnerable to law enforcement measures aimed at illegal trafficking.

## Update: Comprehensive Community Crime Gun Tracing

This section of the Report describes the progress made in comprehensive crime gun tracing during the past year.

Crime gun tracing as a basis for developing and sharing illegal gun market information and collaborating on trafficking investigations is a recent law enforcement innovation. It requires close cooperation between ATF and other Federal, State and local law enforcement authorities that recover crime guns and submit trace requests. This year, ATF's goals were to improve the infrastructure for comprehensive tracing, analysis, and delivery of trace information at ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC); to assist in maintaining and improving tracing capability in the original 17 Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) communities; and to extend comprehensive tracing to police agencies in an additional 10 cities.

**Number of Crime Guns Being Traced Continues to Increase.** Law enforcement officials in the 27 participating cities submitted approximately 76,260 crime gun trace requests between August 1, 1997 and July 31, 1998. This represents 39 percent of the total number of crime gun trace requests submitted to the National Tracing Center during this period. The 10 new YCGII cities submitted 37,393 trace requests, 67 percent more than this group of communities submitted during the same period the previous year.

**Reengineering at the National Tracing Center (NTC) to Handle Increased Tracing Volume and Speed Up Tracing.** To handle the increased volume of trace requests from the 27 participating YCGII sites, and from other jurisdictions around the nation, the NTC in 1998 reengineered its Firearms Tracing System. The new system allows police departments to submit trace requests by electronic download from their records systems or through the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) directly into ATF's tracing system. It also allows ATF to prepare customized trace analysis for particular jurisdictions. Reengineering the system took most of the past year. The new system can process more traces faster. A police department can expect a trace response in 9 to 13 business days, with urgent traces handled within hours or even minutes. As compared with trace response time during the last YCGII tracing period, this represents an almost 50 percent improvement in response time.

**Communities Tracing Comprehensively.** Police departments that join the YCGII make a commitment to trace all crime guns recovered in their jurisdictions. While the NTC cannot determine definitively whether all recovered crime guns are being traced, an evaluation can be made based on the number of trace requests, the tracing infrastructure in the law enforcement agencies, and on information obtained from local officials. On this basis, the NTC determined that during the study period, 23 of the 27 cities were tracing comprehensively. Four cities, Bridgeport, Houston, Los Angeles, and Seattle, either started late, or traced comprehensively during part of the year, due to staffing or computer issues, and are now either tracing all recovered crime guns or, with ATF's assistance, developing the systems to do so. ATF is continuing to work with all participating law enforcement agencies to increase the completeness of trace information provided.

**More Police Departments Developing Electronic Batch Tracing Capability.** The direct electronic transfer of trace requests is more accurate and cost-effective for both ATF and police departments, and makes tracing a large volume of crime guns manageable. Therefore, ATF in 1998 began providing technical assistance to police departments that have made a commitment to comprehensive tracing for the YCGII. The Department of Justice has also provided funding to support this effort. The NTC contacted each participating department to evaluate how their computer systems could most cost-effectively support electronic tracing. In many participating city police departments,

**The Purpose of Comprehensive Community Crime Gun Tracing.** By identifying the last licensed seller, and last unlicensed purchaser of record of a firearm used in a crime, ATF, with the assistance of licensed firearms manufacturers and sellers, may be able to undertake investigations to determine who transferred the crime weapon illegally to the juvenile, or the adult criminal from whom law enforcement officials recovered it. This knowledge allows Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials to investigate, arrest, and prosecute gun traffickers responsible for illegal transfers. Comprehensive tracing maximizes the number of investigative leads available for trafficking investigators. When established, comprehensive crime gun tracing enables ATF and other enforcement agency officials to determine regional and national patterns of illegal gun trafficking, allowing for more effective law enforcement operations.

*ATF emphasizes that the appearance of a Federal firearms licensee (FFL) or a first unlicensed purchaser of record in association with a crime gun or in association with multiple crime guns in no way suggests that either the FFL or the first purchaser has committed criminal acts. Rather, such information may provide a starting point for further and more detailed investigation.*

not all crime-gun and criminal-incident information is available in an automated format for comprehensive tracing purposes. It was also found that each department possessed a different degree of automation capability, which prompted the design of an electronic tracing program that was unique for each city. ATF expects 21 of 27 cities to be using some form of batch electronic trace submission system in 1999. Of the 27 participating police departments, 9 are now electronically transmitting crime gun trace requests to the NTC. The electronic trace file transmission is being

accomplished either through a direct dial-up connection from the police department or via the local ATF Office Network. Chicago, Cincinnati, Birmingham, San Antonio and Houston were among the cities that started electronic tracing this year. ATF will continue to work with police departments to expand batch downloading capacity to other cities throughout the country. ATF's goal is to establish electronic tracing support for all law enforcement agencies with significant numbers of crime gun recoveries.

**National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS).** NLETS is the telecommunications system used by law enforcement for communications involving investigative information. For smaller departments, NLETS provides a good tracing solution, and it can supplement centralized electronic tracing systems in large departments. All 50 States are equipped with NLETS, with access to the system and system design handled by a State coordinator. In 10 YCGII cities, formatted tracing screens have been installed to allow the police department to trace firearms using this system and receive an immediate trace identification number from the NTC in response. ATF is continuing to work with NLETS Board of Directors and State representatives to provide automated means for law enforcement agencies with access to NLETS to trace firearms.

**Training in Firearms Tracing and Illegal Trafficking Investigation.** ATF provided training and technical assistance to ATF field offices and to local law enforcement officials in the recovery of crime guns, information required to initiate a trace, how to submit a trace request, and how to use comprehensive trace information to develop investigative leads for firearms trafficking cases. Due to the important role of firearms trafficking investigations in the reduction of violent crime, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, in a program funded by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, provides training at the NTC for police departments that want to start comprehensive crime gun tracing and trafficking enforcement programs. Several YCGII cities have taken advantage of this program to receive additional training.

### **Partnerships With The Firearms Industry.**

ATF and a number of Federal firearms licensees have formed working partnerships to facilitate the tracing of crime guns. Toward this end, ATF developed a standardized automated system called Access 2000. The system allows the NTC to query an FFL and print a crime gun's history based on the serial number, both speeding up the trace process and reducing industry trace-related costs. ATF is currently using this or similar computerized systems to obtain needed crime gun trace information from RSR Wholesale, Harrington and Richardson, Smith and Wesson, and Davidson Wholesale. Other firearms industry members have expressed an interest in acquiring the hardware and software needed to use Access 2000.

### **New Emphasis on Restoring and Reporting Obliterated Serial Numbers.**

ATF over the past year has increased efforts to work with police departments and law enforcement laboratories to restore the obliterated serial numbers on crime guns. When obliterated serial numbers are restored or even partially restored, the information provides a firearms trafficking investigative lead that can be pursued. Taken as a group, crime guns with obliterated serial numbers are a major resource for identifying firearms trafficking trends and patterns. To develop local coordinated enforcement efforts to trace and proactively target leads derived from recovered crime guns with obliterated serial numbers, ATF began an effort to educate State and local investigators and firearms examiners on the importance of restoring obliterated serial numbers and tracing those firearms, in three day sessions of instructional and hands-on training. The first schools were held in Gary, Indiana; Nashville, Tennessee; and Albuquerque, New Mexico. ATF has been working closely with several YCGII cities—Chicago, Memphis, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Boston—to assist them in restoring obliterated serial numbers and comprehensive tracing of these weapons. Due to improved information in several cities, each Part II YCGII report now includes tables on crime gun recoveries with

**ATF To Expand Availability of Project LEAD.** Project LEAD is ATF's trafficking information system that supports enforcement operations. Trace information is entered in the system, which identifies patterns in crime gun sales and purchases, providing investigative leads to potential illegal traffickers. Project LEAD currently is periodically supplied to selected ATF offices on disks. During 1998, the NTC, in connection with its overall redesign, also reengineered Project LEAD to allow on-line analysis of all traces currently in the system by all ATF offices. ATF expects to complete this process in April 1999. On-line access will make Project LEAD more useful to special agents and local violence reduction task forces. Project LEAD has also been programmed to allow agents to search for sellers and purchasers specifically involved with crime guns recovered from juveniles and youth.

obliterated serial numbers. However information is considered complete for only 8 cities.

**Institutionalizing Trace Analysis.** Crime gun trace analysis is an increasingly valuable tool for law enforcement. To support this mission, ATF has established the Crime Gun Analysis Branch (CGAB) at the NTC. This organization is dedicated to assisting field investigations involving crime guns and crime gun trafficking. The CGAB supports all of the 27 YCGII cities and prepares this Report.

**Analysis of Crime Guns Associated With Multiple Sales.** The requirement that Federal firearms licensees record multiple sales of handguns is a significant investigative tool for illegal trafficking investigations. All crime gun trace requests involving handguns are checked to determine whether the firearm was first sold in a multiple sale. As reported last year, ATF has learned that crime guns later found with obliterated serial numbers are frequently purchased in multiple sales. This year ATF

conducted an assessment of the multiple sales reporting system. As a result of that assessment, ATF changed the multiple sales reporting procedure to simplify and reduce the paperwork burden on FFLs. The new reporting procedure is clearer, quicker, and more accessible to State and local law enforcement, making it a better investigative tool. The NTC anticipates that the new reporting system will facilitate crime gun tracing and analysis.

**Improved Out-of-Business Records Collection.** Crime gun traces begin with a check of out-of-business records, so that manufacturers are not contacted unless necessary. Over the past year, the NTC has made a concerted effort to ensure that its out-of-business records were complete, recognizing that many FFLs did not renew their licenses following changes made in licensing procedures by the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. As a consequence of that effort, 41,000 out-of-business FFLs submitted records to the NTC between August 1997 and August 1998.

**Increasing the Number of Traces That Identify an FFL and a First Retail Transaction.** The NTC is continually improving its ability to diagnose the reasons for missing crime gun trace information—to learn what type of crime gun information is most consistently missing or inaccurately reported, and to determine whether the failure to match serial numbers is due to obliteration, faulty recording, incorrect FFL records, or data mismanagement. This effort is reflected in Table F of this Report, which has been refined and broken into two parts, Table F1 and F2, to more clearly pinpoint problems in the process so that they can be addressed.

For trace requests where the NTC initiated a trace, the NTC identified FFLs for 66.8 percent

of the crime guns and identified purchasers for 59.9 percent of the crime guns. For crime guns recovered from adults, FFLs were identified for 69.5 percent and purchasers were identified for 61.8 percent; for crime guns recovered from youth, FFLs were identified for 70.6 percent and purchasers were identified for 63.6 percent; and, for crime guns recovered from juveniles, FFLs were identified for 63.2 percent and purchasers were identified for 56.2 percent. The primary reasons that purchasers were not identified where a trace was initiated were: first, inaccurate or incomplete firearm serial numbers, including obliterated serial numbers (11.3 percent); second, inaccurate or incomplete identification of the firearm importer (7.1 percent); third, missing or incomplete FFL records (4 percent); and fourth, inaccurate or incomplete name of the manufacturer (3.4 percent).

For about a third of trace requests, the NTC did not initiate a trace, for one of three reasons. Firearms predating the enactment of the 1968 Gun Control Act are generally untraceable. Moreover, during the period covered in this report, the NTC's policy was not to trace firearms manufactured before 1990, unless specifically requested by a law enforcement management official, due to resource considerations. Nonetheless, because the NTC checks all crime gun serial numbers against the FFL out-of-business records, a significant number of pre-1990 traces were still completed and entered into the Firearms Tracing System and Project LEAD. In addition, the NTC does not trace weapons unless they meet the definition of firearm under the Gun Control Act of 1968. Weapons not meeting the definition include, for instance, air guns, certain antique firearms, and BB guns.



## Update: Local Law Enforcement Initiatives

The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative and ATF's illegal trafficking program provide a foundation of investigative information and resources for locally led enforcement efforts aimed at reducing youth and other violent crime. Generally, ATF's enforcement strategy calls for a balance between enforcing laws aimed at deterring and incarcerating armed felons, and enforcing laws relating to the illegal transfer of firearms. The following is a description of some of the enforcement efforts linked to the YCGII that are underway in YCGII cities:

**Project Atlantis.** In Atlanta, ATF in conjunction with the Atlanta Police Department (APD) and their academic partners at Emory University, with the support of the U.S. Attorney, review Project LEAD information to focus on the illegal supply of firearms to youths 24 years old and younger. Emory University provides information on shooting incidents, which is entered into a mapping system pinpointing high crime zones by Zip Codes. This information is matched with Project LEAD crime gun trace information to identify potential traffickers to youth and juveniles in these areas. In addition, the APD has formed a Gun Unit that assists on interviews, works on related cases and forms a focus list of crime gun possessors and potential traffickers. Each target on the list will be interviewed jointly by an ATF special agent and a police official.

**Baltimore's Police Youth Violence Task Force (Strike Force).** The Strike Force mission is to identify and target gang members and violent offenders age 24 and under and to aggressively seek their apprehension and incarceration. Once the strike force has linked a particular gang to homicides, shootings, and other violent activities, it will target them for investigation, and where possible, for prosecution under Federal laws. The strike force is working with the State's Attorney to identify which defendants will be prosecuted in Federal court. The strike force has strong partnerships with all criminal justice agencies: the State Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, ATF, school police, and the Department of Juvenile Justice. By working with the Federal government, the community, and the criminal justice system, the strike force lets young people know that their violent crimes will be dealt with aggressively. The Baltimore Strike Force is working closely with the Maryland Gun Enforcement Initiative (described below) to develop trafficking

cases to reduce the illegal youth and juvenile gun supply.

**The Maryland Gun Enforcement Initiative.** Maryland is in the process of implementing the Maryland Gun Enforcement Initiative, a comprehensive state-wide initiative to reduce gun violence. This initiative targets illegal gun traffickers in an effort to intercept illegal firearms before they are used in violent crimes. Actions such as tracing every crime gun seized in Maryland, establishing an Office of Crime Gun Enforcement, targeting youth gun hot spots, and expanding awareness and enforcement of Maryland's Child Gun Access Prevention Law are all components of the initiative. Many Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies, as well as community institutions and organizations will be part of this initiative. Some of the participating agencies and organizations will include: ATF, the Maryland State Police, the State Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney for Maryland, the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area project (HIDTA), the Division of Parole and Probation, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the University of Maryland, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.

**The Boston Gun Project/Operation Ceasefire.** In place since mid-1996, Boston's Operation Ceasefire is aimed at preventing youth homicide. It combines a local, State, and Federal effort to crack down on the illegal gun supply with a local, State, and Federal strategy to deter violence by youth gangs. Participants in the Gun Project met with gang members, juvenile inmates, and gang outreach workers to deliver the message: violence will not be tolerated in Boston; it will be met with a strong and coordinated interagency response. ATF agents, police, and prosecutors are also using comprehensive tracing, trace analysis,

and investigative techniques to identify and prosecute specific traffickers supplying gangs and other youths with firearms. Participants include the Boston Police Department, ATF, DEA, the U.S. Attorney, the Suffolk County District Attorney, the Massachusetts Department of Probation and Parole, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, school police, youth outreach workers, community groups, and academics from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

**Chicago's Anti-Gun Enforcement Program (CAGE).** The CAGE program, operated by the Chicago Police Department and ATF, is a gun crime suppression strategy designed to prevent the illegal purchase and transfer of firearms. Every crime gun that is recovered in the city of Chicago is traced. When Project LEAD indicates multiple recoveries of crime guns associated with the same first purchaser, ATF notifies the CAGE team and the suspect is interviewed. CAGE works with the U.S. Attorney's Office and State prosecutors to prosecute a suspect under Federal or State law as appropriate. CAGE also investigates any gun incidents that are determined to be gang-related.

**Gary's Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF).** The VCTF was established in 1994 to combine State, local, and Federal law enforcement resources to target violent crimes committed with firearms in and around Gary, Indiana. Authorities concluded that an impact on violent crime would be achieved by identifying firearms traffickers who supply violent criminals. The first objective of the VCTF is proactive investigation of crimes committed with firearms and interdiction of the gun supply in the Gary area, with emphasis on illegal trafficking to juveniles. With the help of ATF, the NTC and Project LEAD, trace data are used to support investigations. The VCTF is composed of ATF and the Gary, Hammond, Portage, and Lake County Police Departments in collaboration with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Project LISA: New Jersey's statewide crime gun tracing system.** ATF and the U.S. Attorney's Office implemented Project LISA (Locate, Identify, Seize and Apprehend) to establish a central

location and structure for producing, analyzing and utilizing firearms intelligence. LISA is a tracing and analysis program in which all law enforcement agencies participate— Federal, State, county and municipal, including all police departments, the State Police and all county prosecutor's offices. LISA aims to locate and trace recovered firearms, identify illegal traffickers, seize contraband firearms, and apprehend violators. Project LISA has resulted in identifying source States, types of firearms recovered, criminal activity involving trafficked firearms and gang activity, as well as documenting trafficking patterns and providing information in complex investigations. As a result, ATF has identified and the U.S. Attorney and local prosecutors have prosecuted, illegal gun traffickers and persons who have committed violent crimes involving the recovered guns. The New Jersey National Guard has been instrumental in providing manpower and computer training expertise. The participation by all law enforcement agencies State-wide is a key element of Project LISA's success.

**Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Detail.** This unit was created in November 1997. The LAPD works with ATF to prevent illegal firearms trafficking to youth and to reduce the injuries and deaths that occur as a result of trafficking to that population. Los Angeles is a 1998 YCGII city, and criminal investigations of traffickers are currently underway.

**Memphis' Youth Crime Gun Task Force.** A Youth Crime Gun Task Force has been formed in an effort to reduce the violent crime rate. The Gun Control Act of 1968 generally prohibits youths from legally purchasing or owning firearms unless specifically authorized. Therefore, rather than prosecuting the juveniles found in possession of a gun, the Memphis Task Force aims to remove the gun from the juvenile and find any adult who illegally provided it. A member of the task force or a juvenile court investigator interviews every juvenile arrested with a gun. Information obtained in interviews has led to investigations and subsequent arrests of adults making illegal gun sales. Participants and supporters of the Memphis Youth Crime Gun Task Force include the U.S. Attorney for

the Western District of Tennessee; the Memphis Police Department; the Shelby County Sheriff's Office; and ATF.

**Miami's Firearms Suppression Team.** In Miami, a program was initiated that involves setting up meetings every two weeks with the Firearms Suppression Team (FAST). The team is composed of the Metro-Dade Police Department, the City of Miami Police Department, and ATF. Prior to the meeting, all the trace results are reviewed by ATF Special Agents and Metro-Dade officers to determine investigative merit. The results are then discussed at the meeting and plans for investigative follow-up are determined. Project LEAD is available at these meetings so that leads developed by the police departments can be checked against the ATF Firearms Tracing System. Some of the participating agencies and organizations include: Metro-Dade Police Department, the City of Miami Police Department, ATF, Dade County State's Attorney's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

**Philadelphia's Firearms Trafficking Task Force.** The Philadelphia Police Department and ATF have formed the Firearms Trafficking Task Force, which has significantly enhanced and focused the collaboration between these agencies. The Task Force has a proactive mandate to identify, target, and shut down illegal sources of firearms in the city and their related distribution networks, and to promote the successful prosecution of firearms trafficking violators. The Task Force is identifying the source of illegal firearms sales, gathering intelligence on all crime gun recoveries, and coordinating their work with all relevant Federal and State agencies. Recognizing the importance of a firearms suppression strategy, the Mayor of Philadelphia has appointed a cabinet level position to coordinate the efforts and strategies undertaken to reduce firearms violence.

**Richmond's Project Exile Task Force.** The Project Exile Task Force is a multi-tiered program that was initiated on February 21, 1997. This initiative includes Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative mandatory tracing of all firearms recovered in Richmond, interviewing case defendants and juveniles to identify illegal sources of

firearms, and compiling intelligence information on youth gangs and open homicide cases. Project Exile's strategy is to prosecute in Federal court all individuals arrested for illegally possessing a firearm, because of the length of mandatory sentences and pre-trial detention provisions. Some of the local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies that work on Project Exile include ATF, the Virginia State Police, the Richmond Police Department, Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the U.S. Marshals, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

**St. Louis' Ceasefire Working Group.** Members from several State and Federal law enforcement agencies and prominent civic groups have come together to form a "Ceasefire Working Group." The group is headed by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern Judicial District of Missouri. This cooperative working group meets once a month to discuss ideas concerning crime prevention and intervention, and to develop enforcement strategies in an effort to combat violent crime in the St. Louis area. ATF issues that are discussed are the YCGII, the Violent Crime Coordinator (VCC) program, and other efforts to curb illegal firearms trafficking. Some of the participating agencies and organizations include: the U.S. Attorney's Office, ATF, St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, St. Louis Sheriff's Department, St. Louis County Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, St. Louis Public Schools, the African American Clergy Coalition of Missouri, State and Federal Probation and Parole, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Tucson's Serious Incident Multi-Agency Response Team (SMART).** A violent crime task force has been formed under the name of SMART. During the last six months, this task force has dedicated its efforts to reducing violent crime among Tucson area youths. Suspects are targeted for Federal prosecution for involvement in firearms trafficking and for illegal possession of firearms. Suspects are identified through firearms tracing. This initiative includes the following agencies: ATF, FBI, U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Border Patrol, DEA, the Tucson Police Department, Pima County Attorney's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

# Future Developments

ATF special agents, in cooperation with State and local enforcement authorities, are making trafficking cases from crime gun trace and related investigative information. Also, the ATF National Tracing Center and Crime Gun Analysis Branch are continuing to develop new techniques to analyze crime gun traces. Future developments will include the following:

**Additional ATF Special Agents to Follow Up Trafficking Leads.** ATF plans to assign additional new agents to YCGII sites to follow up on investigative leads generated by comprehensive tracing, Project LEAD, and other investigative activity.

**On-Line Project LEAD.** ATF will be providing Project LEAD on-line to ATF field offices in April, 1999. This will greatly increase access to Project LEAD by local gun enforcement task forces and facilitate the development of cases against illegal traffickers.

**Expansion of Comprehensive Tracing Support and Trace Analysis Reporting.** ATF plans to provide comprehensive tracing support and trace analysis reporting through YCGII to all cities with populations of 250,000 or more and to other jurisdictions with special firearms crime problems.

**Development of New Training Tool.** ATF is developing a CD-ROM that provides training in how to trace firearms accurately. The program will address common problems of misidentification of firearms. Initially, ATF will train representatives from all YCGII cities in the use of this program, who can then provide the police departments roll call training. Eventually, the training will be provided to all ATF field divisions.

**Reports on Crime Guns Traced to Multiple Purchases.** In the future, information on crime gun traces associated with multiple purchases will be included in crime gun trace analysis reports.

**Additional Training and Reports on Crime Guns With Obliterated Serial Numbers.** As more trace requests are submitted involving crime guns with obliterated serial numbers, the YCGII Report will include more extensive reporting relating to these firearms.

**Analysis of Crime Guns Stolen from Federal Firearms Licensees.** The NTC is developing analyses to determine how stolen firearms enter trafficking networks, and to improve methods available to the firearms retailing industry to prevent thefts.

**Information About Illegal Traffickers and Their Trafficking Patterns.** ATF has begun analyzing case reports for statistical information about traffickers and their trafficking patterns. This information will be reported in the future.

**State and National Level Crime Gun Trace Information.** With annual trace requests approaching 200,000, ATF is preparing to issue trace analysis reports by State and at the national level.

# Information for Law Enforcement Executives

This section answers frequently asked questions from law enforcement executives about the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, comprehensive tracing, and ATF's firearms enforcement programs.

## **What is comprehensive crime gun tracing?**

This means submitting the serial numbers and related information from all firearms recovered by law enforcement authorities in a given jurisdiction to ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC). Until recently, most cities have submitted gun serial numbers for tracing only when the information is needed to solve a major crime.

## **What will comprehensive crime gun tracing do for policing and crime reduction in my city?**

Firearms used in crime are often obtained through illegal transfers, i.e., firearms traffickers, straw purchasers, corrupt firearms dealers, and fences dealing in stolen firearms. When the NTC compiles comprehensive crime gun trace information, it can furnish information relating to the following questions: 1. What kinds of guns are being used by what kinds of criminals? 2. Who are the individuals selling guns on the streets? 3. Who are the firearms dealers involved? 4. What are the recovery locations? 5. Are the source areas in the city, the State, or from out of State? 6. Where should their resources be concentrated to stem the flow of firearms to their streets? With this information, a department working with ATF can establish an enforcement strategy to reduce juveniles' and criminals' illegal access to guns. Firearms tracing can also lead to improved officer safety, since it can alert officers to crime gun activity in a specific location, or by a particular individual.

## **Since ATF tracing has been around for a while, why is it being emphasized now?**

Gun trafficking enforcement has been locked in a chicken and egg situation for some time. Without adequate crime gun tracing and other criminal intelligence, despite many important individual Federal illegal trafficking cases, it has been difficult to mount effective collabora-

tive Federal, State and local anti-trafficking strategies. At the same time, because of lack of knowledge about how to mount effective cooperative anti-trafficking initiatives, there has been low demand by State and local police agencies for tracing and trace information. Over the last several years, ATF has been attempting to bridge this gap from both directions— increasing the analysis of crime gun traces provided to local jurisdictions, and placing more emphasis on developing collaborative criminal investigation of illegal firearms trafficking.

In general, both Project LEAD, the NTC's firearms trafficking information system, and crime gun analysis, have greatly increased the potential productivity of a strategy for enforcing Federal, State and local laws against illegal gun transfers to juveniles and prohibited persons, especially violent criminals. Project LEAD is being more widely deployed, and is becoming easily accessible by gun task forces throughout the country for law enforcement operations. The NTC's growing capability to provide analyses of crime gun data that allow police agencies to see clearly the number, types, and sources of guns in their jurisdictions, allows for strategy development that was not possible when law enforcement officials relied exclusively on street intelligence.

## **What is needed to start comprehensive tracing, is it expensive, and will ATF assist?**

Tracing is free to the requesting jurisdiction; the NTC will trace any and all crime guns submitted for tracing.

The NTC wants police departments to trace firearms and has developed several methods to make comprehensive tracing more efficient. The NTC works with police departments on establishing the easiest methods for them to trace firearms and provides training. Trace

forms can be filled out manually and faxed, or, in emergencies, trace requests can be made by telephone.

To provide a more efficient way to trace firearms without added paperwork and cost, the NTC has established an electronic trace connection through the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS). When officers check the system for stolen firearms, they can continue to another screen and process a trace request at the same time. This not only saves time but also paperwork, and they are ensured that their information has been received by the NTC. The NLETS tracing screen is available at present in about 19 States, and ATF is working with the NLETS organization to expand the capability. There is no additional cost to the department for the NLETS connection.

To assist larger police departments, the NTC has created an electronic batch download program that can be adapted to submit large numbers of traces from the department's own centralized recordkeeping system. For example, the NTC uses this method with the New York Police Department and Chicago Police Department and has received tens of thousands of traces from them. The NTC supplied the equipment for the downloading, and assisted with the necessary customizing programming. The NTC will also send teams of NTC tracing personnel to help police departments search their firearms vaults for backlogs of firearms that have not been traced.

Funding sources for trace related assistance have included the NTC, the YCGII, and the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Office (COPS Office) "Making Officer Redeployment Effective" (MORE) program.

**Does the police department receive responses to trace requests directly, how long does it take, and what information is provided?**

After a firearm is submitted to be traced, the trace report containing the results of the trace is returned to the requester. A routine firearm trace takes nine to 13 business days, when the trace can be completed. Urgent traces, which must adhere to certain criteria, are completed

within 24 hours. Criteria for an urgent trace include: assaults, bank robbery, kidnapping, murder/suicide, rape/sex crimes, terrorist act or threat, undercover investigation, necessity to hold a suspect in custody, or issuance of a search warrant.

Trace results contain information about the FFL who came in contact with the firearm, i.e., manufacturer, wholesaler, retailer, as well as information about the individual who first purchased the firearm. A firearms trace acts as an avenue to obtain additional investigative leads which may tie the suspect to other crimes otherwise unknown if the gun had not been traced.

ATF would like to emphasize that the appearance of an FFL or a first purchaser in association with a crime gun or in association with multiple crime guns in no way suggests that either the FFL or first purchaser has committed criminal acts. Rather, such information may provide a starting point for further and more detailed investigations.

**Does the police department have access to Project LEAD?**

Project LEAD, ATF's automated illegal firearms trafficking information system, produces investigative leads based on analysis of nationwide and regional crime gun trace information, and identifies patterns in crime gun recoveries. Project LEAD can pinpoint repeat sources of crime guns to particular age groups or locations. Queries to Project LEAD, must be made through an ATF field division office. The value of Project LEAD depends on law enforcement agencies tracing crime guns comprehensively. ATF field divisions have a designated Project LEAD Coordinator who is instructed to work closely with local law enforcement and provide them with data related to their firearms trafficking trends and patterns. ATF is working to install on-line Project LEAD capability in all ATF field offices by April, 1999. This will make Project LEAD readily available to local task forces. Currently, the NTC is developing a Geographic Information System to analyze crime gun recoveries that will be integrated with Project LEAD and be available to local jurisdictions.

**Do all crime gun traces result in identification of purchasers, and if not, why submit all recovered firearms for tracing?**

Most crime gun traces result in useful information. Comprehensive community tracing allows the NTC to report back uniform statistics regarding the kinds of guns associated with particular types of offenders in reporting jurisdictions. Trace requests that result in identifying a FFL can reveal concentrations of crime guns flowing from particular dealers, and provide information on the source State of that firearm, thus helping local law enforcement officials understand whether crime guns they recover have crossed State lines. Trace requests that result in the identification of first purchasers are obviously even more useful for trafficking investigations.

**How will comprehensive crime gun tracing help reduce the juvenile gun problem?**

One of the surprising findings of both last year's and this year's YCGII Report is that a large proportion of crime guns recovered from juveniles, and adult felons, are quite new and most likely deliberately and illegally trafficked. This year's YCGII Report also confirms last year's finding that many crime guns were first sold at retail in-state. The long held presumption that guns used in crimes were all borrowed from home, stolen, and old, or new guns that were trafficked across State lines, appears to be incorrect. Comprehensive crime gun tracing and trace analysis can support both trafficking investigations aimed at these sources of newer firearms and the deployment of traditional criminal investigation techniques (debriefings,

confidential informants, turning of arrestees, etc.) aimed at sources of new and older firearms. Because juveniles have less access to the firearms market than adults, a strategy that targets their illegal supply can be especially productive.

**How do comprehensive tracing and an illegal trafficking enforcement strategy relate to a strategy of deterring and incarcerating persons illegally possessing, carrying, or using firearms?**

ATF enforces Federal firearms laws, and assists State and local law enforcement authorities in enforcing their gun laws. At the Federal level, ATF believes that a balance between attacking the illegal supply of firearms to prohibited persons, including juveniles and adult felons, and deterring and incarcerating armed violent offenders, is necessary to reducing violent crime. ATF's comprehensive tracing and trace analysis are part of the Boston Gun Project/Ceasefire and numerous other violence reduction and law enforcement strategies. Local law enforcement authorities are actively searching to find the best mix of local enforcement operations. ATF is providing new assistance to that effort by working to institute comprehensive tracing capabilities in communities and using trace analysis to support investigations. These tools are providing new opportunities to attack the illegal gun market, which often has been ignored because it was viewed as impervious to law enforcement efforts. Nevertheless, it is critical to focus both on the illegal sources and on the illegal users of firearms in order to reduce violence in a community.

# Part II



# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

### Table A: Requests for Crime Gun Traces

This table displays the number of crime gun trace requests from this community to the National Tracing Center. It also indicates the completeness of certain trace data submitted for analysis. Lack of data may reflect unavailability or an issue that remains to be addressed by the police department and ATF. Since participating police agencies are in various stages of electronic and procedural changes to enhance comprehensive tracing of all crime guns recovered, complete information may not have been readily available (ie. possessor identity, possessor's date of birth, date crime gun recovered, etc.).

	<b>Number of Requests</b>	<b>Percent of Requests</b>
Trace Requests	3,292	100.0%
Trace Request Identifies Possessor	1,535	46.6%
Trace Request Provides Possessor's Date of Birth	1,118	34.0%
Trace Request Identifies Date Crime Gun Recovered	2,605	79.1%

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

### Table B: Crime Gun Trace Requests by Age of Possessor

This table provides information concerning the age of the possessors of the crime guns for which trace requests were submitted from this community to the National Tracing Center. Lack of data may reflect unavailability or an issue that remains to be addressed by the police department and ATF. Since participating police agencies are in various stages of electronic and procedural changes to enhance comprehensive tracing of all crime guns recovered, complete information may not have been readily available (ie. possessor identity, possessor's date of birth, date crime gun recovered, etc.). In addition, not all crime guns can be associated with a possessor when a trace request is made since not all recovered firearms are found in an individual's possession. Therefore, the breakdown by age group is not expected to be based on all recovered crime guns.

	<b>Number of Requests</b>	<b>Percent of Requests</b>
Trace Requests	3,292	100.0%
Trace Requests for Which Possessor's Age Can Be Determined	1,118	34.0%
Juvenile Crime Gun Trace Requests (Ages 17 and Under)	118	10.6%*
Youth Crime Gun Trace Requests (18 Years of Age Through 24 Years of Age)	373	33.4%*
Adult Crime Gun Trace Requests (25 Years of Age or Older)	627	56.1%*

\* Based on the trace requests for which the possessor's age can be determined.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table C: Crime Gun Trace Requests by Type of Firearm**

This table depicts the number of crime gun trace requests from this community by firearm type. Recoveries are identified as having been from adults, youth, juveniles, age unknown, and a combined category. This information can be useful in developing an enforcement strategy that focuses on the kinds of crime guns used by particular age groups.

Type of Firearm	Juveniles		Youth		Adults		Age Unknown		Total	
	(ages 17 & under)		(ages 18-24)		(ages 25 & over)					
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Semiautomatic Pistol	65	55.1%	230	61.7%	309	49.3%	940	43.2%	1,544	46.9%
Revolver	35	29.7%	104	27.9%	214	34.1%	581	26.7%	934	28.4%
Rifle	9	7.6%	21	5.6%	52	8.3%	313	14.4%	395	12.0%
Shotgun	9	7.6%	16	4.3%	46	7.3%	301	13.8%	372	11.3%
Derringer	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	6	1.0%	18	0.8%	25	0.8%
Combination*	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	14	0.6%	15	0.5%
Machine Gun	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.2%	4	0.1%
Unknown Gun Type	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%
Total	118	100.0%	373	100.0%	627	100.0%	2,174	100.0%	3,292	100.0%

\* A combination firearm is a multi-barreled firearm containing two or more different caliber barrels.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table D: Most Frequent Crime Gun Trace Requests:  
Type, Manufacturer, and Caliber by Age of Possessor**

This table depicts the most frequently recovered and traced crime guns by firearm type, manufacturer, and caliber in this community. This report does not distinguish among models of firearms of the same type, manufacturer and caliber. For instance, all .38 caliber revolvers manufactured by Smith and Wesson are considered as a group. Recovered crime guns are often concentrated among relatively few kinds of firearms.

### Juveniles (ages 17 and under)

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Kinds of Crime Guns	Number of Crime Guns	Percent of Crime Guns
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38		8	6.8%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	9mm		5	4.2%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380		4	3.4%
Shotgun	Mossberg	12GA		4	3.4%
Semiautomatic Pistol	FEG	9mm		3	2.5%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380		3	2.5%
Revolver	Harrington & Richardson	.32		3	2.5%
Rifle	North China Industries	7.62mm		3	2.5%
Revolver	Taurus	.38		3	2.5%
Revolver	Harrington & Richardson	.38		2	1.7%
Summary for Ten Most Frequent Kinds of Crime Guns			10	38	32.2%
Summary for All Other Kinds of Crime Guns			66	80	67.8%
Total Crime Guns			76	118	100.0%

### Youth (ages 18 through 24)

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Kinds of Crime Guns	Number of Crime Guns	Percent of Crime Guns
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380		14	3.8%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380		11	2.9%
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38		10	2.7%
Revolver	Ruger	.357		9	2.4%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Ruger	9mm		9	2.4%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Colt	.45		8	2.1%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Bryco	.380		7	1.9%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Taurus	9mm		7	1.9%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Smith & Wesson	9mm		7	1.9%
Revolver	Rossi	.38		6	1.6%
Summary for Ten Most Frequent Kinds of Crime Guns			10	88	23.6%
Summary for All Other Kinds of Crime Guns			152	285	76.4%
Total Crime Guns			162	373	100.0%

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

### Adults (ages 25 and older)

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Kinds of Crime Guns	Number of Crime Guns	Percent of Crime Guns
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38		43	6.9%
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.357		29	4.6%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Ruger	9mm		17	2.7%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380		16	2.6%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Raven	.25		16	2.6%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380		13	2.1%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Bryco	.32		12	1.9%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Smith & Wesson	9mm		11	1.8%
Revolver	Taurus	.38		11	1.8%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Glock	9mm		10	1.6%
Summary for Ten Most Frequent Kinds of Crime Guns			10	178	28.4%
Summary for All Other Kinds of Crime Guns			206	449	71.6%
Total Crime Guns			216	627	100.0%

### All Crime Guns in This Jurisdiction\*

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Kinds of Crime Guns	Number of Crime Guns	Percent of Crime Guns
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38		174	5.3%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Smith & Wesson	9mm		82	2.5%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Ruger	9mm		82	2.5%
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.357		77	2.3%
Shotgun	Mossberg	12GA		76	2.3%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Glock	9mm		72	2.2%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380		68	2.1%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Colt	.45		58	1.8%
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380		56	1.7%
Revolver	Ruger	.357		52	1.6%
Summary for Ten Most Frequent Kinds of Crime Guns			10	797	24.2%
Summary for All Other Kinds of Crime Guns			496	2,495	75.8%
Total Crime Guns			506	3,292	100.0%

\* This section reports the top ten guns traced for all age groups and where the possessor's age is unknown. Therefore, guns appearing in this section may differ from those that appear in the first three sections of this table.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table E: Crime Types Most Frequently Associated with Crime Gun Trace Requests**

This table depicts the crimes most frequently associated with firearms trace requests submitted from this jurisdiction by age. This information can be useful in developing an enforcement or intervention strategy that focuses on particular types of crimes. The general term “Firearm Offenses” can include any offense or crime in which a firearm was involved. It is also commonly used by local law enforcement agencies when more detailed crime information is not available at the time the trace request is submitted to the National Tracing Center.

Crime Type	Juveniles		Youth		Adults		Age Unknown		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Firearm Offenses	102	86.4%	304	81.5%	510	81.3%	1,781	81.9%	2,697	81.9%
Homicide	0	0.0%	5	1.3%	7	1.1%	124	5.7%	136	4.1%
Kidnapping	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	4	0.1%
Robbery	7	5.9%	9	2.4%	11	1.8%	23	1.1%	50	1.5%
Sex Crimes	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	0.4%	8	0.2%
Assaults/Threats	4	3.4%	14	3.8%	40	6.4%	68	3.1%	126	3.8%
Burglary/Theft/Fraud	0	0.0%	4	1.1%	1	0.2%	15	0.7%	20	0.6%
Vice Crimes	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Narcotics	5	4.2%	26	7.0%	49	7.8%	18	0.8%	98	3.0%
Other Crime Types*	0	0.0%	9	2.4%	9	1.4%	135	6.2%	153	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3,292</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Other Crime Types include: arson, immigration and explosives violations.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table F1: Results of Crime Gun Traces**

This table depicts the number and percentages of crime gun trace requests received by the NTC for this community; the number and percentage of crime gun traces that were able to be initiated; and the extent to which the trace progressed. Where a trace identifies a Federal firearms licensee (FFL, or retail dealer), the NTC can generally determine the source state of the firearm and the date on which it was first sold at retail. Further information from the FFL is required to identify first purchasers.

**Juveniles ( ages 17 and under)**

	<b>Number of Crime Gun Trace Requests</b>	<b>Percent of Crime Gun Trace Requests</b>	<b>Percent of Crime Gun Traces Initiated</b>
Crime Gun Trace Requests	118	100.0%	
Crime Gun Traces Initiated*	76	64.4%	100.0%
Crime Gun Traced to FFL**	41	34.7%	53.9%
Purchaser Identified***	35	29.7%	46.1%

**Youth (ages 18 through 24)**

	<b>Number of Crime Gun Trace Requests</b>	<b>Percent of Crime Gun Trace Requests</b>	<b>Percent of Crime Gun Traces Initiated</b>
Crime Gun Trace Requests	373	100.0%	
Crime Gun Traces Initiated*	257	68.9%	100.0%
Crime Gun Traced to FFL**	180	48.3%	70.0%
Purchaser Identified***	158	42.4%	61.5%

\* This Table is based on crime guns associated with adults, youth, juveniles, and individuals whose ages are unknown. Crime gun trace requests may not be initiated for various reasons, such as: the NTC received incorrect information or insufficient information to complete a firearms trace request; improper nomenclature of a firearm or misidentification of a firearm or the firearm's importer. Many firearms first sold at retail prior to 1990 can be traced through the National Tracing Center's Out-of-Business records; otherwise, however, the NTC does not trace firearms older than 1990 unless specifically requested by a law enforcement official. Firearms predating the enactment of the 1968 Gun Control Act are generally untraceable. In addition, NTC policy is not to trace weapons that are not covered under Title I of the Gun Control Act. This includes firearms such as machine guns, as well as black powder or BB guns.

\*\* Reasons that crime guns may not be traced to a Federal firearms licensee include: the fact that manufacturer or wholesaler records were incomplete, destroyed, missing, not properly maintained, illegible, seized by law enforcement officials or were not received by the NTC Out-of-Business records section when one of those entities went out of business (FFL is an abbreviation for Federal firearms licensee).

\*\*\* Reasons that crime guns may not be traceable to a first purchaser include: that retailer records were incomplete, destroyed, missing, not properly maintained, illegible, seized by law enforcement officials or were not received by the NTC Out-of-Business section when the FFL went out of business.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

### Adults (ages 25 and over)

	Number of Crime Gun Trace Requests	Percent of Crime Gun Trace Requests	Percent of Crime Gun Traces Initiated
Crime Gun Trace Requests	627	100.0%	
Crime Gun Traces Initiated*	432	68.9%	100.0%
Crime Gun Traced to FFL**	344	54.9%	79.6%
Purchaser Identified***	301	48.0%	69.7%

### All Crime Guns in This Jurisdiction

	Number of Crime Gun Trace Requests	Percent of Crime Gun Trace Requests	Percent of Crime Gun Traces Initiated
Crime Gun Trace Requests	3,292	100.0%	
Crime Gun Traces Initiated*	2,227	67.6%	100.0%
Crime Gun Traced to FFL**	1,446	43.9%	64.9%
Purchaser Identified***	1,252	38.0%	56.2%

\* This Table is based on crime guns associated with adults, youth, juveniles, and individuals whose ages are unknown. Crime gun trace requests may not be initiated for various reasons, such as: the NTC received incorrect information or insufficient information to complete a firearms trace request; improper nomenclature of a firearm or misidentification of a firearm or the firearm's importer. Many firearms first sold at retail prior to 1990 can be traced through the National Tracing Center's Out-of-Business records; otherwise, however, the NTC does not trace firearms older than 1990 unless specifically requested by a law enforcement official. Firearms predating the enactment of the 1968 Gun Control Act are generally untraceable. In addition, NTC policy is not to trace weapons that are not covered under Title I of the Gun Control Act. This includes firearms such as machine guns, as well as black powder or BB guns.

\*\* Reasons that crime guns may not be traced to a Federal firearms licensee include: the fact that manufacturer or wholesaler records were incomplete, destroyed, missing, not properly maintained, illegible, seized by law enforcement officials or were not received by the NTC Out-of-Business records section when one of those entities went out of business (FFL is an abbreviation for Federal firearms licensee).

\*\*\* Reasons that crime guns may not be traceable to a first purchaser include: that retailer records were incomplete, destroyed, missing, not properly maintained, illegible, seized by law enforcement officials or were not received by the NTC Out-of-Business section when the FFL went out of business.



# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table F2: Results of Crime Gun Traces—Detailed Analyses**

	<b>Number of Crime Guns</b>	<b>Percent of Crime Guns</b>
<b>Crime Gun Trace Requests</b>	3,292	100.0%
<b>Crime Gun Trace Not Initiated</b>	1,065	32.4%
<b>Reasons Trace Not Initiated*</b>		
<b>Firearm Manufactured Before 1990 and     Not Traceable Through Out-of-Business Records</b>	992	30.1%
<b>Other Reasons</b>	73	2.2%
<b>Crime Gun Trace Initiated</b>	2,227	67.6%
<b>Trace Initiated: Purchaser Identified</b>	1,252	38.0%
<b>Trace Initiated: Purchaser Not Identified</b>	975	29.6%
<b>Reasons Purchaser Not Identified</b>		
<b>Trace Terminated Before Inquiry</b>		
<b>Made of Federal Firearms Licensee</b>	781	23.7%
Problem with Manufacturer Name	143	4.3%
Problem with Importer Name	228	6.9%
Problem with Crime Gun Serial Number**	391	11.9%
Crime Gun Previously Reported Stolen	19	0.6%
<b>Trace Terminated After Inquiry</b>		
<b>Made of Federal Firearms Licensee</b>	194	5.9%
No Response from Licensee	2	0.1%
Licensee Records Are Unavailable	76	2.3%
FFL Records on this Crime Gun Are Unavailable	99	3.0%
Licensee Reports This Crime Gun Stolen	17	0.5%

\* Crime gun trace requests may not be initiated for various reasons: the NTC received incorrect information or insufficient information to complete a firearm's trace request; improper nomenclature of a firearm or misidentification of a firearm or the firearm's importer. Many firearms first sold at retail prior to 1990 can be traced through the National Tracing Center's Out-of-Business records; otherwise, however, the NTC does not trace firearms older than 1990 unless specifically requested by a law enforcement official. Firearms predating the enactment of the 1968 Gun Control Act are generally untraceable. In addition, NTC policy is not to trace weapons that are not covered under Title I of the Gun Control Act. This includes firearms such as machine guns, as well as black powder or BB guns.

\*\* This category includes misread, obliterated and obscured serial numbers. The number submitted may also be wrongly identified as a serial number or may not match records of guns manufactured. See Table I: Crime Guns with Obliterated Serial Numbers.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table G: Time-to-Crime Rates for Most Frequently Traced Crime Guns by Type, Manufacturer and Caliber**

This table depicts “time-to-crime” rates for those crime guns most frequently requested for tracing as depicted in Report E. Time-to-crime is the period of time between the first retail sale of a firearm by a Federal firearms licensee and the time the firearm is recovered by enforcement officials or requested for tracing. A short time-to-crime rate can be an indicator of illegal trafficking. In the tables below, the proportion of traceable firearms showing a time-to-crime rate of less than three years is shown; experienced trafficking investigators view a time-to-crime rate of less than three years as an especially useful trafficking indicator. Time-to-crime information can be useful in developing an enforcement strategy that identifies and investigates the specific sources of these firearms.

### Juveniles (ages 17 and under)

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Crime Guns		Time to Crime*		
			All	With Time-to-Crime	Less than 3 Years Number	Percent	Fastest Case (in Days)
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38	8	2	0	0.0%	3,641
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	9mm	5	1	1	100.0%	825
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380	4	4	1	25.0%	728
Shotgun	Mossberg	12GA	4	1	0	0.0%	1,650
Semiautomatic Pistol	FEG	9mm	3	1	0	0.0%	3,499
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380	3	3	1	33.3%	890
Revolver	Harrington & Richardson	.32	3	1	0	0.0%	9,308
Rifle	North China Industries	7.62mm	3	1	0	0.0%	1,607
Revolver	Taurus	.38	3	1	1	100.0%	602
Revolver	Harrington & Richardson	.38	2	0	0		

### Youth (ages 18 through 24)

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Crime Guns		Time to Crime*		
			All	With Time-to-Crime	Less than 3 Years Number	Percent	Fastest Case (in Days)
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380	14	13	7	53.8%	95
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380	11	10	3	30.0%	296
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38	10	3	0	0.0%	1,228
Revolver	Ruger	.357	9	2	2	100.0%	608
Semiautomatic Pistol	Ruger	9mm	9	8	4	50.0%	600
Semiautomatic Pistol	Colt	.45	8	1	1	100.0%	419
Semiautomatic Pistol	Bryco	.380	7	5	3	60.0%	200
Semiautomatic Pistol	Taurus	9mm	7	5	1	20.0%	393
Semiautomatic Pistol	Smith & Wesson	9mm	7	5	3	60.0%	65
Revolver	Rossi	.38	6	2	1	50.0%	132

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

### Adults (ages 25 and over)

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Crime Guns		Time to Crime*		Fastest Case (in Days)
			All	With Time-to-Crime	Less than 3 Years Number	Percent	
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38	43	5	2	40.0%	225
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.357	29	2	0	0.0%	2,074
Semiautomatic Pistol	Ruger	9mm	17	13	6	46.2%	285
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380	16	15	9	60.0%	89
Semiautomatic Pistol	Raven	.25	16	6	0	0.0%	2,601
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380	13	11	5	45.5%	244
Semiautomatic Pistol	Bryco	.32	12	12	12	100.0%	361
Semiautomatic Pistol	Smith & Wesson	9mm	11	3	3	100.0%	16
Revolver	Taurus	.38	11	3	2	66.7%	172
Semiautomatic Pistol	Glock	9mm	10	7	1	14.3%	808

### All Crime Guns in this Jurisdiction\*\*

Type of Crime Gun	Manufacturer	Caliber	Number of Crime Guns		Time to Crime*		Fastest Case (in Days)
			All	With Time-to-Crime	Less than 3 Years Number	Percent	
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.38	174	25	4	16.0%	225
Semiautomatic Pistol	Smith & Wesson	9mm	82	24	12	50.0%	16
Semiautomatic Pistol	Ruger	9mm	82	54	24	44.4%	76
Revolver	Smith & Wesson	.357	77	15	2	13.3%	685
Shotgun	Mossberg	12GA	76	28	10	35.7%	9
Semiautomatic Pistol	Glock	9mm	72	28	12	42.9%	187
Semiautomatic Pistol	Lorcin	.380	68	54	22	40.7%	186
Semiautomatic Pistol	Colt	.45	58	13	4	30.8%	250
Semiautomatic Pistol	Davis	.380	56	48	24	50.0%	89
Revolver	Ruger	.357	52	16	6	37.5%	48

\* In 71 of the 76,260 traces in this report, the Time to Crime is 0; this indicates the recovery of a firearm during or immediately following a sale from a Federal firearms licensee.

\*\* This table is based on crime guns associated with adults, youth, juveniles and individuals whose ages are unknown.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table H: Most Frequent Source States for Crime Guns Traced to a Firearms Dealer**

This table depicts the most frequent source states for crime guns recovered in this city and traced to a firearms dealer. This information can be useful in developing an enforcement strategy that identifies and investigates the specific illegal sources of crime guns from those areas.

**Juveniles (ages 17 and under)**

Crime Gun Source State	Number of Crime Guns	Percent Crime Guns*
Virginia	15	29.4%
Maryland	14	27.5%
Florida	4	7.8%
Georgia	3	5.9%
North Carolina	3	5.9%
South Carolina	3	5.9%
California	1	2.0%
Utah	1	2.0%
Oregon	1	2.0%
West Virginia	1	2.0%
Total: Top 10 Source States	46	90.2%
Total: Other Source States	5	9.8%
Total : All Crime Guns with Source State Identified	51	100.0%

**Youth (ages 18 through 24)**

Crime Gun Source State	Number of Crime Guns	Percent Crime Guns*
Virginia	66	31.3%
Maryland	46	21.8%
North Carolina	14	6.6%
Florida	13	6.2%
West Virginia	7	3.3%
Pennsylvania	7	3.3%
Georgia	5	2.4%
Louisiana	5	2.4%
Texas	5	2.4%
Alabama	4	1.9%
Total: Top 10 Source States	172	81.5%
Total: Other Source States	39	18.5%
Total : All Crime Guns with Source State Identified	211	100.0%

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

### Adults (ages 25 and over)

<b>Crime Gun Source State</b>	<b>Number of Crime Guns</b>	<b>Percent Crime Guns*</b>
Virginia	93	27.8%
Maryland	74	22.2%
Florida	32	9.6%
West Virginia	19	5.7%
North Carolina	15	4.5%
California	11	3.3%
Georgia	9	2.7%
Pennsylvania	9	2.7%
New York	9	2.7%
South Carolina	8	2.4%
Total: Top 10 Source States	279	83.5%
Total: Other Source States	55	16.5%
Total : All Crime Guns with Source State Identified	334	100.0%

### All Crime Guns in this Jurisdiction

<b>Crime Gun Source State</b>	<b>Number of Crime Guns</b>	<b>Percent Crime Guns*</b>
Virginia	337	23.0%
Maryland	294	20.1%
Florida	174	11.9%
North Carolina	82	5.6%
West Virginia	56	3.8%
California	56	3.8%
Georgia	48	3.3%
Pennsylvania	46	3.1%
Texas	41	2.8%
South Carolina	30	2.0%
Total: Top 10 Source States	1,164	79.5%
Total: Other Source States	301	20.5%
Total : All Crime Guns with Source State Identified	1,465	100.0%

\* This Table is based on crime guns associated with adult, youth, juvenile, and individuals whose ages are unknown.

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

**Report Period:** August 1, 1997 - July 31, 1998

**Table I: Crime Guns with Obliterated Serial Numbers\***

Crime guns can have partially or completely obliterated serial numbers. This report may reflect an undercount of obliterated and restored serial numbers because trace requests from local law enforcement agencies may not indicate when obliterated serial numbers have already been restored prior to their submission to the National Tracing Center.

### Juveniles (ages 17 and under)

Type of Firearm	All Crime Guns		Obliterated Serial Number		
	Number	Percent**	Number	Percent**	Percent of Type**
Semiautomatic Pistol	65	65.0%	2	50.0%	3.1%
Revolver	35	35.0%	2	50.0%	5.7%
Derringer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100	100.0%	4	100.0%	4.0%

### Youth (ages 18 through 24)

Type of Firearm	All Crime Guns		Obliterated Serial Number		
	Number	Percent**	Number	Percent**	Percent of Type**
Semiautomatic Pistol	230	68.7%	18	81.8%	7.8%
Revolver	104	31.0%	4	18.2%	3.8%
Derringer	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total	335	100.0%	22	100.0%	6.6%

# ATF CRIME GUN TRACE ANALYSIS REPORT

## Washington, DC

### Adults (ages 25 and over)

Type of Firearm	All Crime Guns		Obliterated Serial Number		
	Number	Percent**	Number	Percent**	Percent of Type**
Semiautomatic Pistol	309	58.4%	7	53.8%	2.3%
Revolver	214	40.5%	5	38.5%	2.3%
Derringer	6	1.1%	1	7.7%	16.7%
Total	529	100.0%	13	100.0%	2.5%

### Age Unknown

Type of Firearm	All Crime Guns		Obliterated Serial Number		
	Number	Percent**	Number	Percent**	Percent of Type**
Semiautomatic Pistol	940	61.1%	62	63.9%	6.6%
Revolver	581	37.8%	34	35.1%	5.9%
Derringer	18	1.2%	1	1.0%	5.6%
Total	1,539	100.0%	97	100.0%	6.3%

\* Figures on obliterated serial numbers include handguns only. It is not always possible to determine from trace data whether or not the serial number of a long gun has been obliterated.

\*\* Based on the trace requests for which the possessor's age can be determined.

# Technical Notes

## 1. Interpreting Information in National Tracing Center Records from YCGII Jurisdictions

This note discusses limitations in using this information to compare one YCGII jurisdiction with another and comparing the same jurisdiction from one year to the next.

The Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative began in 1996. It is an emerging collaboration among Federal, State and local law enforcement officials, ATF field offices, the ATF National Tracing Center, and the academic community to improve enforcement of the Federal firearms laws, especially those relating to illegal firearms transfers.

This is the second report published by ATF which uses information from trace requests submitted from YCGII jurisdictions to describe the nature of crime guns recovered by law enforcement agencies in those jurisdictions. This information improves the knowledge base for the enforcement of Federal and State firearm regulations, however, it is subject to several limitations. These arise out of three basic factors.

First, the program is undergoing constant change. The effort to achieve comprehensive tracing has not been fully institutionalized. In 17 jurisdictions, this is only the second year of this program; in 10 jurisdictions, this is the first full year of participation.

Second, the extent of program implementation varies from one jurisdiction to another based on each one's size, extent of agency computerization, and the nature of its crime gun problem. At this stage of development, it is not appropriate to attempt to impose a single program on all participating jurisdictions.

Third, the program is still developing. ATF and local law enforcement agencies are still learning from each other how to best implement this program and to utilize the information obtained. This report and others to be produced by the Crime Gun Analysis Branch of the National Tracing Center are part of that developing process.

These factors result in data limitations, among them the following:

The crime gun traces from the first year in any jurisdiction may include many crime guns recovered in previous years. These weapons, or records of them, have been maintained by law enforcement agencies and they are included in the program's efforts to obtain comprehensive tracing and a usable initial set of trace data. ATF refers to this phenomenon as "vaulting," since some departments keep old firearms in vaults. This is generally a one-time phenomenon, which generates an unusually high number of crime guns in each jurisdiction's initial report.

Some jurisdictions have not yet reported all the firearms for the past year. Changing law enforcement procedures to obtain all crime guns from all agencies does not happen immediately or consistently throughout a particular agency. In such jurisdictions, the lag in reporting recovered firearms to ATF will generate data on fewer firearms than law enforcement agencies actually recovered in that jurisdiction.

The data reported here reflects the behavior of law enforcement agencies whose policies and practices, including when and how firearms are recovered and how those recoveries are recorded, are changing in response to local attention to firearms crimes. These changes could increase or decrease the number of firearms trace requests made to the National Tracing Center.

The basic underlying criminal behavior may also be changing. In some jurisdictions, like New York City and Boston, the number of firearms related homicides and other crimes has dropped dramatically between 1996 and 1998. Changes in the number of trace requests could reflect changes in the number of crime guns that come to the attention of law enforcement agencies.

While the 27 participating jurisdictions provide a wide spectrum of American life, they do not in any way represent a national sample of law



enforcement agencies or crime guns recovered by law enforcement agencies. Participation in this program is voluntary, and jurisdictions were not selected to be a representation of large cities or of the nation as a whole.

For these and other reasons, the available data from the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative does not constitute a fully developed statistical series from which reliable comparisons can be made from one reporting period to the next or from one participating jurisdiction to another. The data is used in this report as descriptive of the trace requests of particular jurisdictions during the past year. The nature of these limitations is similar to those initially encountered by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). Begun in the 1930's as a voluntary program by a few large jurisdictions, the UCR program has been developed over the past 70 years to include consistent definitions and standards detailed reporting procedures and nearly uniform participation by law enforcement agencies. The purpose of YCGII is to assist law enforcement by providing a detailed description of crime guns recovered in a given jurisdiction during the past year, and that is the most appropriate use of the data in this report.

## 2. Time-to-Crime Estimation Procedure

To estimate the percentage of crime guns rapidly diverted from retail sale at federally licensed firearms dealers, ATF used the following method:

ATF arrived at a high end estimate of the proportion of guns rapidly diverted to crime gun status by comparing the number of crime guns with a time-to-crime of less than three years, with the number of crime guns with a time-to-crime of more than three years, among the subset of the crime guns submitted for tracing that were traced to a purchaser and for which the date of purchase and the age of possessor was available. These methods of estimation produce a high end estimate of the proportion of guns diverted from the retail market because they do not include in the estimate any data from guns that were not traced because they were manufactured prior to 1990. Guns manufactured and sold on the retail market prior to 1990 would clearly add to the number of guns with a time-to-crime of greater than 3 years. The analysis of time-to-crime by age of possessor using this estimation procedure is presented in the High End Estimate table below.

**Time-to-Crime: High End Estimates of  
The Percentage of Successfully Traced Crime Guns Rapidly Diverted  
From First Retail Sale at Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers**

Time-to-Crime	Adult		Youth		Juvenile		Row Totals	
	%	[guns]	%	[guns]	%	[guns]	%	[guns]
Less than three years	40.2	(2,968)	49.0	(2,354)	36.4	(516)	42.9	(5,838)
More than three years	59.8	(4,407)	51.0	(2,451)	63.6	(900)	57.1	(7,758)
Column Totals	100%	7,375	100%	4,805	100%	1,416	100%	13,596

Number of Missing Observations: 62,664

ATF used two sets of procedures to develop Low End time-to-crime estimates for crime guns for which the age of possessor was known but for which the date of purchase was missing. First, all traces terminated because the guns in question were manufactured before 1990 were assumed to have a time-to-crime of greater than three years. Second, crime guns manufactured (and sold) during the 36 months prior to the end of the YCGII reporting period (August 1995 to July 1998) must have had a time-to-crime of less than three years. ATF conservatively assumed that crime guns manufactured during the 67 months from January 1990 to July 1995 had a time-to-crime greater than three years. ATF assumed that the number of

guns with longer time-to-crime was proportional to the number of months in the earlier period while the number with short time-to-crime was proportional to the number of months in the later period. Using this method, 34.95% of the crime guns which were manufactured after 1989 and for which there was no date of purchase available were estimated to have a time-to-crime of three years or less, and 65.05% were estimated to have a time-to-crime of more than three years. The analysis of time-to-crime by age of possessor using these estimation procedures produces Low End estimates of time-to-crime. These estimates are presented below.

**Time-to-Crime: Low End Estimates of  
The Percentage of Successfully Traced Crime Guns Rapidly Diverted  
From First Retail Sale at Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers**

<b>Time-to-Crime</b>	<b>Adult</b>		<b>Youth</b>		<b>Juvenile</b>		<b>Row Totals</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>[guns]</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>[guns]</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>[guns]</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>[guns]</b>
Less than three years	27.1	(4,985)	32.3	(3,413)	25.1	(951)	28.6	(9,349)
More than three years	72.9	(13,385)	67.7	(7,169)	74.4	(2,841)	71.4	(23,395)
Column Totals	100%	(18,370)	100%	(10,582)	100%	(3,792)	100%	(32,744)

Number of Missing Observations: 43,516

**3. Calculation of Percentages.**

The tables and figures in this report were prepared using SPSS or Microsoft Excel software. We have chosen to report all percentages as they were calculated by these programs. It is occasionally possible, using a calculator or different software, to produce percentages that differ by as much as 0.1 percent from the reported percentages.

**4. Factors Affecting Trace Outcomes**

There is an additional factor affecting trace outcomes identified in Table F2. For investigative reasons, a small number of traces, between one and two percent for all 27 cities combined, were either deliberately not initiated at all, or were suspended before an FFL query. In the current Table F2, the outcomes of these traces are attributed to other factors that were also present.

# Acknowledgments

The development of a new uniform reporting system to present crime gun trace information from cities across the United States is a great challenge and much hard work. It is being accomplished due to the commitment and dedication of the individuals responsible for collecting, researching, analyzing, and publishing the data contained in this report. The ATF Crime Gun Analysis Branch and the National Tracing Center would like to acknowledge the assistance of the many people in connection with this report. These include the following: ATF special agents and their police department counterparts who ensured traces were submitted in a timely and accurate fashion to the NTC; ATF Headquarters staff which provided consistent support; and the Department of Treasury's Office of the Under Secretary for Enforcement, including Assistant Secretary Elisabeth A. Bresee for her continuing support, Senior Advisor Susan Ginsburg, for her vision and assistance, and Pat Esposito, Herb Jones, Patrick Bell, and Douglas James. There have also been outside agencies and organizations whose officials and associates have offered encouragement and outstanding support for

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