

# News Release

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**Re: Major Incident – 06-033.1**

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## **PROJECT BLUEGRASS NETS LARGE CACHE OF GUNS IN CANADA**

Peel, Ontario – Investigators from the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit, in partnership with Peel Regional Police and the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), have wrapped up **PROJECT “BLUEGRASS,”** identifying 85 handguns that had been purchased in the United States for importation into Canada.

Several of these handguns were used during the commission of violent crimes across Southern Ontario, including attempted murders and a jewellery store robbery in London, where shots were fired at police.

The principal suspect in this two-year investigation was a U.S. citizen, who relocated to Toronto. It is alleged that he was expanding his criminal activities to include the illegal manufacture of handguns in Canada.

On **Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Riccardo TOLLIVER**, 29 years-of-age, residing in Toronto, was arrested in a vehicle, while in possession of a loaded handgun that it is alleged he produced and was attempting to sell. He is facing numerous firearms related offences, including Conspiracy to Import Firearms, Conspiracy to Traffic Firearms and Firearms Trafficking. He was remanded for a Bail Hearing at the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton.

Two accomplices are also facing several firearms charges. They are **Sonita LANGFORD**, 24 years, of Toronto, and **Sandip GHOSH**, 25 years, of no fixed address. Both were remanded for Bail Hearings in Brampton, Ontario.

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A total of 37 handguns were recovered, 15 of them in the Greater Toronto Area. A search warrant carried out at a Toronto residence netted firearm frames and parts, two 30-round prohibited magazines for a machine-type pistol and a quantity of ammunition. A selection of milling tools, presses and schematic diagrams for the manufacture of handguns were also seized.

A news conference was held today at Peel Regional Police Headquarters outlining the details of this investigation.

**Peel Regional Police Chief Mike Metcalf** stated “Preventing the proliferation of handguns in our communities and their use in criminal activities is a top priority for us. We have many dedicated officers and specialized units whose primary goal is to get these weapons off our streets.”

**Inspector Steve Clegg of the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit** said “It is imperative that police services and other agencies work together to prevent firearms-related crime. Project Bluegrass is a fine example of how effective these partnerships can be at putting a dent in the spread of illegal handguns.”

**Special Agent in Charge Valerie J. Goddard, U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)**, stated, “International firearms trafficking is a top priority for ATF. There are individuals both in the U.S. and Canada whose sole motivation is to make money by selling guns to the criminal element. Our experience shows that these guns quickly become used in violent crimes.” SAC Goddard added, “ATF continues to enjoy our strong partnership with the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit, as we are both engaged in disrupting the flow of crime guns onto our streets.”