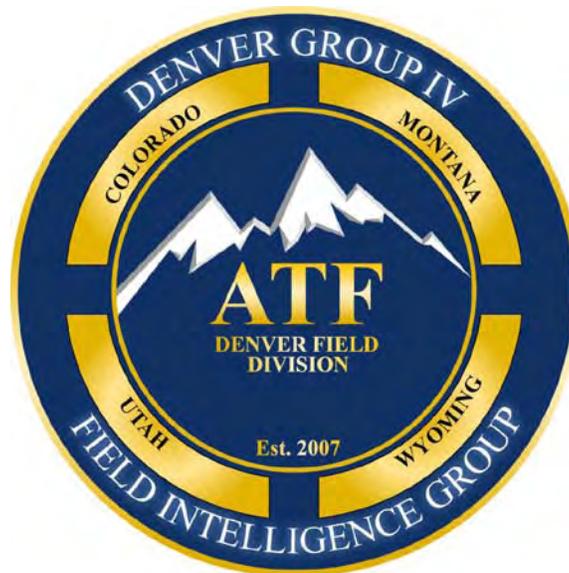




Firearms Trafficking: Utah to Venezuela

ATF Tactical Intelligence Bulletin



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5/01/2011

(U/LES) **Summary.** In 2010, a Venezuelan national residing in Salt Lake City, Utah purchased (20) Glock 9 mm pistols and (2) Smith & Wesson .380 pistols at several federally licensed dealers along the Wasatch Front in Utah. The suspect was an illegal alien who overstayed a legitimate visa in 2002. The suspect circumvented background checks by using a false U.S. place of birth. The suspect illegally shipped firearms with other merchandise to Venezuela for resale. The suspect's intent of illegally shipping firearms to Venezuela was to supply security contractors who were protecting businessman and landowners near the border of Colombia from violent acts from Colombian terrorist groups.

(U/LES) **Narrative.** During a recent search warrant in December 2010, ATF special agents and task force officers of the ATF Salt Lake City Field Office discovered two Glock frames encased with electronic circuit boards and electrical tape in the suspect's apartment. One of the encased Glock frames, along with a magazine, was found inside a plastic toy truck. Agents also recovered several receipts for gun purchases and boxes of ammunition.

The suspect bought appliances, toys, and cosmetics for resale in Venezuela. He hid firearms and gun magazines inside used toys and electronics, specifically remote control cars and CD players. To avoid detection by x-ray machines, the suspect concealed Glock frames with electronic circuit boards, wrapped them in electrical tape, and then reinserted the contraband inside the toy or player. The original barrels and slides of the pistols were not transported with the frames in an effort to minimize risk of detection. From an interview of the suspect, the case agent learned that the suspect had adopted this methodology of concealment to avoid x-ray detection from an unknown program on the Discovery Channel.

The suspect used the U.S. Postal Service and FedEx to ship boxes to freight forwarding companies in Florida. The freight forwarders unwittingly delivered the boxes containing the contraband to known addresses in the Zulia State in Venezuela. Minimizing shipping costs were the motivation for transporting choices and decisions. The suspect successfully smuggled (19) handguns to Venezuela.

The suspect was arrested for several federal firearms violations. In March 2011, the suspect pled guilty to Smuggling Goods from the United States and Possession of Firearms by an Illegal Alien. He is awaiting federal sentencing in July.

(U/LES) **Conclusion.** Collaboration between the community and law enforcement resulted in a federal arrest and conviction of a firearms smuggler. The suspect's activities became suspicious to a gun dealer in Utah. The Federal Firearms License (FFL) dealer notified an ATF Industry Operation Inspector of the activity during a routine inspection of the dealership. The suspect attempted to purchase a specific Glock 9mm model, but it was not available; he asked for any available Glock 9 mm off the shelf. The suspect further refused receipt of the gun case and user handbooks and factory documentation that usually accompanies a new firearm. A review of several Firearms Transaction Records (ATF Form 4473) revealed that the suspect was inconsistent with his place of birth using both San Rafael, California and Venezuela.

For further information, contact ATF Special Agent Minichino, Salt Lake City Field Office at (801) 524-7018 or ATF Intelligence Research Specialist Robert Atadero, Denver Field Intelligence Group at (801) 524-7057.



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Glock 9mm #1 (front)



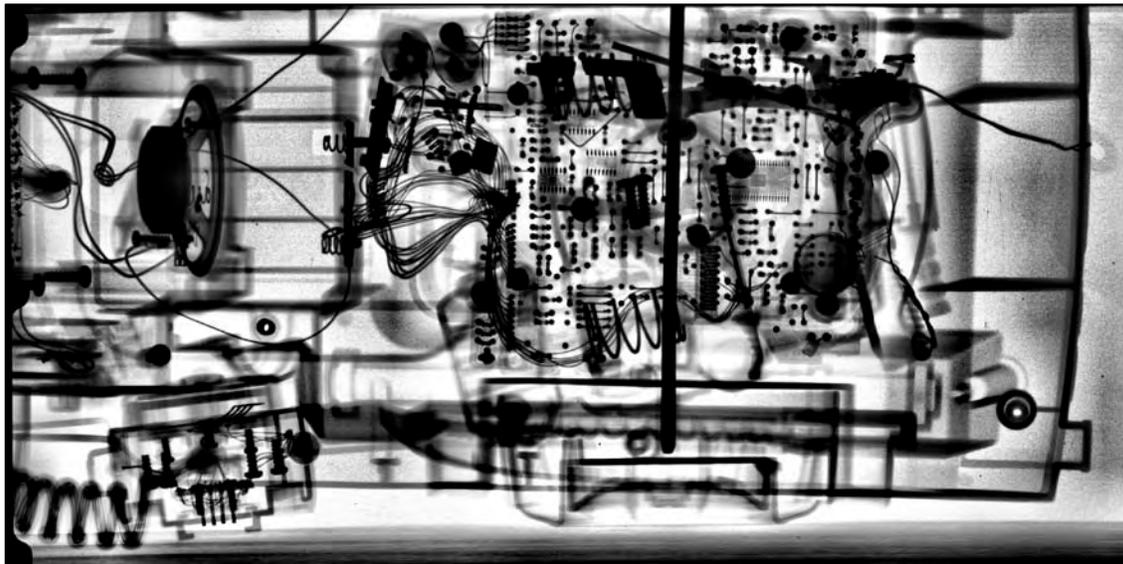
Glock 9mm #1 (back)



Glock 9mm #2 (front)



Glock 9mm #2 (back)



*This is the x-ray of the toy truck, from an overhead view, with one of the Glock frames staged inside.
(X-ray test photo courtesy of FBI Salt Lake City Division)*