



# Department of Justice

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**STATEMENT OF**  
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**SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE**  
**CHICAGO FIELD DIVISION**  
**BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**BEFORE THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**FOR A HEARING ENTITLED**  
**“COMBATING GUN TRAFFICKING AND REDUCING VIOLENCE**  
**IN CHICAGO”**

**PRESENTED**

**DECEMBER 13, 2021**

**Statement for the Record of Kristen de Tineo  
Special Agent in Charge  
Chicago Field Division  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Before the Senate Committee on Judiciary**

**December 13, 2021**

Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to appear before you to discuss the efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and our partners in combating gun trafficking and reducing violence in Chicago. My name is Kristen de Tineo, and I am the Special Agent-in-Charge (SAC) of ATF's Chicago Field Division. It is my great honor to represent the men and women of ATF before you today.

As a career Special Agent, I have served in field and management positions across the country, experiencing collaboration and partnership everywhere I have served. As the SAC of the Chicago Field Division, I draw from that experience to lead an extraordinary team of Special Agents, Industry Operations Investigators, intelligence professionals, and support staff, in partnership with local, state, and federal counterparts to protect the public from violent firearms crimes.

The cornerstone of ATF's criminal enforcement strategy to address gun violence is crime gun intelligence, the gathering of all known information about the history of a crime gun all those who trafficked, unlawfully possessed, or used that firearm. Two key components of crime gun intelligence are ATF's National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) and firearms tracing conducted by ATF's National Tracing Center.

ATF's NIBIN system is the only national network that allows for the capture and comparison of ballistic evidence to aid in solving and preventing violent crimes involving firearms. The Chicago Police Department is engaged with the NIBIN program, operating four NIBIN machines and entering recovered ballistic evidence into the system. That ballistic evidence is critical evidence that assists both in investigations and prosecutions.

To further enhance the effectiveness of NIBIN in Chicago, since 2019, ATF's National NIBIN Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC) has provided correlation review services and other support to the Chicago Police Department. Specifically, when a firearm is discharged, it ejects a shell casing and leaves unique markings on the casing, much like a fingerprint. The NIBIN system uses cutting-edge technology to collect 3-D digital ballistic images of spent shell casings recovered from crime scenes and from crime gun test-fires. Through comparison of digital images in NIBIN, investigators are able to link, or correlate, shooting incidents in which the same gun was used, and match shell casings from a crime scene to a specific firearm. This technology allows investigators to connect separate shooting incidents and help identify those responsible. Correlation review linking shell casings recovered at crime scenes to crime guns locally, regionally, and nationally is one of the most challenging aspects of effectively using NIBIN for individual police departments, such as the Chicago Police Department, because it is

the most labor-intensive and time-consuming part of the process. The NNCTC provides a solution: its highly trained specialists provide prompt correlation review and results – most often within 48 hours – ensuring timely dissemination of actionable leads to investigators. Access to NNCTC is enhancing the effectiveness of NIBIN in Chicago, which is an essential step in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting those responsible for violent gun crime.

An equally important component of crime gun intelligence is firearms tracing. ATF is the sole agency in the United States authorized to trace firearms for law enforcement. The ATF National Tracing Center is the only crime gun tracing facility in the country.

In 2021 alone, more than 3,000 shootings and over 700 homicides have occurred in Chicago. These are not just numbers on a page. Each of these numbers represents a child who has lost a parent, a parent who has lost a child, a family devastated by gun violence, or a victim of domestic violence facing lethal harm.

The ATF Chicago Field Division remains dedicated to our mission to build and strengthen partnerships to address gun violence. The Firearms Trafficking Strike Force in Chicago, led by U.S. Attorney Lausch, is a clear example of sustained and focused coordination among local, state and federal law enforcement partners across jurisdictions to disrupt firearms trafficking networks. Leveraging existing resources, the strike force has been using data, evidence, and intelligence from crime scenes to identify patterns, leads, and potential suspects in violent gun crimes. Addressing firearms trafficking is only one component of ATF's strategy in Chicago to disrupt the cycle of gun violence by identifying and targeting those who illegally transfer firearms, those who illegally possess firearms, and those who use firearms to commit violence.

These types of investigations and prosecutions span from a single defendant charged with illegal possession of a firearm, to the investigation and prosecution of criminal organizations, to the cross-jurisdictional investigation of a firearms trafficking scheme. While the U.S. Attorney's Office has been providing regular comprehensive updates of the strike force's activities, a few examples of the kinds of investigations ATF has been working on include:

- In July 2020, a Chicago man, who qualified as an armed career criminal, was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison on his conviction for being a felon-in-possession of a firearm. The conduct underlying the conviction included the defendant shooting into the grave of a murder victim during the burial service, endangering the lives and intimidating the funeral attendees;
- Last month, a federal indictment was unsealed charging 13 alleged leaders, members and associates of the Wicked Town faction of the Traveling Vice Lords street gang with participating in a criminal organization that murdered 19 people and protected a drug-dealing operation utilizing firearms on the West Side of Chicago;
- In October of this year, a superseding indictment added additional carjacking and firearms charges against a Chicago man accused of murdering a rideshare driver during a carjacking earlier this year; and
- In October, four men were charged with federal firearm offenses for allegedly trafficking firearms from St. Louis to Chicago.

These examples highlight ATF's commitment to impactful investigative work, none of which is possible without the strong partnerships among local, state, and federal law enforcement and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Under the exceptional leadership of U.S. Attorney John Lausch, and along-side our partners at the Chicago Police Department and the Illinois State Police, we are leveraging resources through the Firearms Trafficking Strike Force to ensure coordination across jurisdictions to disrupt entire trafficking networks, from the states where firearms are diverted to illegal commerce and ultimately to the places where they are used in violent crimes. We utilize crime gun intelligence to focus our resources to effectively meet that mission. We are systematically attacking gun violence and disrupting the cycle of gun violence that too often begins with illegal activity such as gun trafficking and ends in tragedy in our Chicago neighborhoods.

Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee, at the beginning of my statement, I mentioned that I am a Special Agent, having spent my whole career dedicated to ATF's mission of violent crime reduction and working collaboratively with all my partners.

Now, as the head of the ATF Chicago Field Division, it is no different. Our mission is accomplished through both criminal and regulatory enforcement. We must leverage technology, use crime gun intelligence to allocate our resources, and most importantly stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our local, state and Federal law enforcement partners to continue our legacy of using great partnerships to bring those who inflict unspeakable harm on our communities to justice. Together we are making a difference in our communities.

Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today.