



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**John E. Murphy, U.S. Attorney**

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August 24, 2010

**FORMER EL PASO FBI AGENT SENTENCED FOR FEDERAL FIREARMS VIOLATIONS**

**United States Attorney John E. Murphy** announced that in El Paso this morning, former Federal Bureau of Investigation special agent John Shipley was sentenced to two years in federal prison for violating federal firearms laws.

Senior United States District Judge David Briones also ordered that Shipley be placed under supervised release for a period of three years and complete 250 hours of community service after completing his prison term. Judge Briones also ordered that Shipley forfeit 17 firearms including two .50 caliber Barrett rifles; ammunition in various calibers including over 2,800 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition; one silencer; and, \$7,340 in cash seized during the execution of a federal search warrant at Shipley's residence on May 6, 2008.

"Federal agents are not exempt from the laws which they swore to uphold," stated United States Attorney John E. Murphy. "Mr. Shipley is being held accountable for his own criminal actions. They are in no way a reflection of the outstanding work being accomplished by dedicated federal, state and local law enforcement across this District and this country."

This investigation—conducted by agents from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General together with agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives—commenced with a firearms trace of a .50 caliber sniper rifle sold by Shipley. That rifle was recovered by Mexican authorities following a gunbattle between suspected narcotraffickers and the Mexican military near Chihuahua, Mexico, on March 8, 2008.

"By illegally dealing in firearms, Shipley violated the trust that the public placed in him as a law enforcement official," said Wayne D. Beaman, Special Agent in Charge, Dallas Field Office, Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. "The Office of the Inspector General is committed to vigorously investigating and referring for prosecution any Department of Justice law enforcement official who engages in this type of illegal conduct."

"This investigation shows ATF's commitment into stopping the illegal trafficking of firearms that are fueling the cartel violence south of the border. Along with our associates on both sides of the border, ATF will leave no stone unturned in achieving this goal," stated ATF Special Agent in Charge Robert Champion, Dallas Field Division.

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On April 14, 2010, a federal jury convicted Shipley of one count of dealing firearms without a license, four counts of causing a firearms dealer to maintain false records and one count of making a false statement to federal authorities. Jurors found that Shipley engaged in the business of dealing in firearms from January 2005 until May 2008, while not being licensed as a Federal Firearms Dealer. Evidence presented during trial revealed that Shipley posted firearms for sale using an internet website more than 200 times, including multiple postings for many firearms. During that three-and-a-half-year time period, Shipley also purchased at least 54 firearms, then sold at least 51 of those firearms for more than \$118,000.

Jurors also found that on four occasions between July 2007 and May 2008, Shipley provided false information on ATF forms 4473 when purchasing firearms at local gun shops stating that he was the actual buyer, when in fact, he was not.

Finally, jurors found that on March 21, 2008, Shipley provided to federal authorities a document—a Dealers' Firearms Record Book—which Shipley claimed was his only complete and accurate listing of the firearms he bought and sold, knowing that he had another Dealers' Firearms Record Book which contained a more extensive descriptive and accurate list of firearms he bought and sold.

Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald and Juanita Fielden prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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