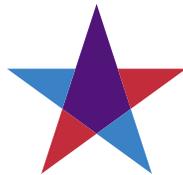


***UNCOVERING THE  
TRUTH ABOUT  
PENNSYLVANIA  
CRIME GUNS***



**BRADY**  
UNITED AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Brady's analysis in this Report is based on publicly available information posted on the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General's Pennsylvania Gun Tracing Analytics Platform. Brady assumes the data set is accurate as of August 2021 for purposes of publishing this report. A copy of the data set as downloaded is available on file with the author.

# ABOUT BRADY

Founded in 1974, Brady works across Congress, courts, and communities, uniting gun owners and non-gun owners alike, to take action, not sides, and end America's gun violence epidemic. Our organization today carries the name of Jim Brady, who was shot and severely injured in the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan. Jim and his wife Sarah led the fight to pass federal legislation requiring background checks for gun sales. Brady continues to uphold Jim and Sarah's legacy by uniting Americans from coast to coast — red and blue, young and old, liberal and conservative — against the epidemic of gun violence.

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# INTRODUCTION

Every gun on our streets starts somewhere, and the overwhelming majority have their origins in the legal marketplace. Understanding how guns — particularly those that have been diverted from legal commerce to the underground market — make their way to crime scenes is essential to crafting evidence-based and life-saving solutions to the American gun violence epidemic. There is — or should be — nothing controversial about this tracing approach. Epidemiologists and other scientists routinely study the origins of public health challenges in order to develop effective solutions, treatments, and preventative measures. It is a key component of the scientific method.

Unfortunately, the best national data on the sources and paths of crime guns has been hidden from researchers, journalists, and the general public for nearly two decades. The gun industry successfully pushed the federal government to restrict public access to this critical gun trace data, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has aided the industry's efforts by adopting an overly broad interpretation of those regulatory restrictions. Although some state and local law enforcement agencies have released gun

trace data in the last 20 years, the amount has been insufficient to develop the comprehensive, life-saving solutions that we need.

In this report you will find an analysis of the most important gun trace dataset to be publicly available in decades. Attorney General Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania has released trace data for 186,000 crime guns from over 150 law enforcement agencies in his state, allowing the public to identify, for the first time in decades, which gun dealers *appear* to supply the most guns to the illegal market. This data is publicly available on the [Pennsylvania Gun Tracing Analytics Platform](#).

*It is very important to note that the gun tracing dataset, while extensive, is not comprehensive. It does not include crime guns recovered by local Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies that have opted against sharing trace data. For that reason, the findings in this report are not the definitive picture of crime guns in the state.*

However, this dataset should nonetheless enable the public, policymakers, and law enforcement to hold the gun industry accountable for its role in

**UNDERSTANDING HOW GUNS — PARTICULARLY THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN DIVERTED FROM LEGAL COMMERCE TO THE UNDERGROUND MARKET — MAKE THEIR WAY TO CRIME SCENES IS ESSENTIAL TO CRAFTING EVIDENCE-BASED AND LIFE-SAVING SOLUTIONS TO THE AMERICAN GUN VIOLENCE EPIDEMIC.**

supplying crime guns — and, in doing so, ultimately save lives. By focusing on the small number of gun dealers now known to be contributing to the problem, Pennsylvanians and their leaders will be able to put political, legal, and economic pressure on the irresponsible actors of the gun industry and bring about needed reforms to ensure that firearms are transferred responsibly and safely.

Like all data, gun trace data has its limits; its insights, while key to understanding gun trafficking, are just one part of that process. Earlier this year, Brady unveiled an extensive — and ever-growing — database containing another piece to the puzzle: ATF compliance inspection reports detailing federal firearms licensees (FFLs) who have been issued a warning letter or more severe remedy for cited violations of gun laws. We encourage readers to also view that resource, the Gun Store Transparency Project, at [www.gunstoretransparency.org](http://www.gunstoretransparency.org).

As you read through these findings, keep in mind that many of the 186,000 crime guns in the database are likely associated with one or more crime victim(s) and their families. If this were not staggering enough, the devastating ripple effects gun violence inflicts on families, neighborhoods, and communities are not captured in these numbers.

Brady invites you to join us in advocating for solutions that address the supply side of gun violence. We invite researchers to study this data and build on our analysis; we implore journalists to report on not just the tragic results of gun violence incidents, but how crime guns end up in our communities; we urge lawmakers and law enforcement to adopt life-saving, supply-side solutions to gun violence; and we call on federal,

state, and local authorities to be more transparent by releasing more trace data to the public. It is long past time for the gun industry as a whole to adopt meaningful supply-side solutions ensuring firearms are transferred safely and responsibly, as it is neither fair nor just to ask the communities suffering the immense harms of gun violence to also bear the burden of providing all the solutions.

## KEY TERMS

### WHAT ARE “CRIME GUNS” AND WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

**A crime gun is a gun that has been recovered by law enforcement after being used — or suspected of having been used — in a crime, or whose possession may in itself have been a crime.** A crime gun might be a stolen firearm, a firearm found at a scene of a crime, or a firearm used in a crime. Almost every crime gun has one factor in common: It originated from a firearm manufacturer. A 2019 Department of Justice report estimated that 43% of all crime guns come from the “illegal firearm market.”<sup>1</sup> However, firearms obtained via such illicit commerce originate from somewhere, most often starting with their manufacture, then distribution, and eventual sale by a licensed dealer. Determining how legally purchased or manufactured firearms make their way to crime scenes is vital for law enforcement and policymakers aiming to identify and address the origins of the illegal gun market.

## WHAT IS “TRACE DATA” AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

When a firearm is found at or associated with a crime scene, law enforcement agencies have the ability to trace it through the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Local law enforcement agencies can enter the make, model, caliber, and serial number of a specific firearm into the ATF’s eTrace system, allowing them to follow the flow of that firearm from its legal construction or importation by a manufacturer/importer, wholesaler, or distributor, to a federally licensed firearms dealer, and finally to the firearm’s original purchaser. However, at any point in this commercial flow from manufacturer/importer to sale, firearms can be diverted toward the illegal market.

It is vital that law enforcement not only trace crime guns via the eTrace system to determine the origins of these weapons, but investigate patterns of diversion to the illegal market so these patterns can be disrupted and the flow of crime guns stemmed. However, limitations upon local law enforcement agencies can be a barrier to such investigations; most have limited resources and are either prohibited or discouraged from conducting investigations outside their jurisdiction. Since many crime guns come from outside the jurisdiction where they are recovered, crime gun investigations often fall outside the local law enforcement agency’s jurisdiction, requiring cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Pennsylvania’s gun tracing database fosters this kind of cooperation between local law enforcement agencies, encouraging them to share critical, life-saving information.

The majority of federally licensed firearm dealers

(FFLs) in the United States are responsible business owners who sell firearms in compliance with federal, state, and local law. Only a small minority supply the criminal market with guns; about 5% of firearm dealers are responsible for about 90% of recovered crime guns.<sup>2</sup> Because “sales volume alone does not account for the disproportionately large number of traces associated with these firearms dealers,”<sup>3</sup> there is clear evidence that certain dealers behave in a way that contributes to our nation’s crime gun problem.

## WHAT IS THE TIAHRT AMENDMENT?

Prior to 2003, ATF conducted and made public an annual nationwide analysis on the origins of crime guns. **Unfortunately, in October 2003, due to the lobbying efforts of the gun industry, the Tiahrt Amendment was added to the 2003 federal appropriations bill. Among other ill-advised policies, the Tiahrt Amendment restricted the ATF from spending funds to make raw trace data available to the public.** In response, the agency has adopted such an overly broad interpretation of the amendment that very little information related to trace data ever makes its way to the public.

Instead, the results of ATF firearm traces are reported only to the law enforcement agency that originally recovered the crime gun and entered it into the eTrace system, and that agency must affirmatively opt into data sharing before any other agencies can see or make use of its tracing information. As a result, there is often no coordinated analysis of firearm trace data by local, county, or state agencies — and while the ATF produces an annual report listing the type, calibers, and state of origin of traced crime guns, analysis and public availability of the data stops there.

## WHAT CAN TRACE DATA TELL US? WHAT TRACING DETAILS INDICATE POTENTIAL TRAFFICKING?

**Making trace data public, as the Pennsylvania Gun Tracing Analytics database does, allows local communities and law enforcement agencies to identify the gun dealers transferring the largest number of crime guns.** The last time national trace data was available, it showed that only about 5% of dealers transferred 90% of crime guns, and only 1.2% of gun dealers were responsible for 57% of crime guns. Approximately 86% of gun dealers did not have a single firearm traced back to them in a given year.<sup>4</sup> A high number of traces paired with a short average “time-to-crime” rate — the period of time between a firearm’s first retail sale and law enforcement’s recovery of the firearm in connection with a crime — is a strong indicator that a gun dealer is supplying firearms to illegal gun traffickers. Indeed, the ATF’s Crime Gun Analysis Branch (CGAB), in cooperation with Northeastern University, has developed a series of trafficking indicators which include a “short time-to-crime (under 3 years) for crime guns traced to an FFL or first retail purchaser.”<sup>5</sup> According to the ATF, recovery of a gun that was first sold less than three years prior “signals direct diversion, by illegal firearms trafficking — for instance through straw purchases or off the books sales by corrupt FFLs.”<sup>6</sup>

Straw purchasers are those who illegally buy guns on behalf of others, concealing the identity of the actual purchaser. Some straw buyers are purchasing for a specific person, but others are operating as gun traffickers, buying quantities of guns to sell to numerous users or move through trafficking supply chains — usually to individuals who cannot obtain a gun from the legal market.

Trace data also reveals which types of guns are most frequently used in crime. In the past, this information has resulted in stronger regulations for specific types of firearms. Revealing which guns are disproportionately used in crime and have a special appeal to gun traffickers exposes the gun manufacturers who design and sell such products to exploit the highly profitable illegal market.

In short, trace data is an essential tool for identifying and holding accountable the minority of irresponsible gun dealers and manufacturers who cater to the illegal gun trafficking market. Families of the injured and killed deserve to know how their loved ones were harmed; communities deserve to know where the illegal guns that flood their streets are coming from. It is only with this knowledge that they can take action to prevent further tragedy.

# PENNSYLVANIA GUN TRACING DATABASE

## WHAT IS IN THE DATASET?

In 2019, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro launched an Initiative for “investigating how prohibited purchasers obtain firearms and strategically shutting down those pipelines.” As part of the initiative, trace data from participating law enforcement agencies is shared on an interactive website, the Pennsylvania Gun Tracing Analytics Platform, which shows aggregate data of crime gun traces for firearms recovered in the state. According to the website, “[the] tool is intended to let you explore gun crimes and gun trafficking throughout the Commonwealth and to see where guns recovered in crimes in Pennsylvania originally came from.”

Any visitor to the website can download the raw

data used to create its maps and charts. The raw data includes a row for every individual trace and 95 columns reflecting the variables that are known about that trace, as listed in the Appendix. These variables include:

- information about the gun,
- the crime to which its recovery is related,
- the law enforcement agency conducting the trace,
- the possessor of the gun at the time it was recovered,
- the county in which it was purchased,
- and dates of purchase and recovery.

**Traces in the database date back to 1977. The most current trace at the time we downloaded the data in August 2021, was from 2020. The dataset includes 186,000 individual traces.**

## DATA + STATISTICS

### PA GUN TRACING ANALYTICS PLATFORM

The screenshot displays the PA Gun Tracing Analytics Platform dashboard. It features a map of Pennsylvania with counties shaded in blue, representing the state of origin for recovered guns. To the right of the map, there are three summary statistics: RECOVERED GUNS (57,574), HANDGUNS (48,987), and OUT OF STATE (30%). Below these are two bar charts: 'TIME TO CRIME (YEARS)' with a median TIC of 5.62, and 'RECOVERY YEAR' showing a distribution of traces from 2000 to 2020. At the bottom, there is a 'PURCHASER AGE' chart with an average age of 35.7 and a median age of 32. A 'STATE OF ORIGIN' chart shows the distribution of guns by state, with PA being the largest category. On the right side of the dashboard, there are circular icons for 'GUN' (RIFLE, REVOLVER) and 'PURCHASER' (Unknown, Link).

The Pennsylvania Gun Tracing Analytics Platform shows aggregate data of crime gun traces for firearms recovered in Pennsylvania. This tool is intended to let you explore gun crimes and gun trafficking throughout the Commonwealth and to see where guns recovered in crimes in Pennsylvania originally came from.

[VIEW THE DATA →](#)

## WHICH AGENCIES CONTRIBUTED TO THE DATASET?

The gun tracing database includes traces only from participating Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies. In order to participate, an agency must not only use ATF's eTrace system to conduct traces, but also opt in to data sharing. Over the years, the number of agencies participating has varied. Some agencies may use eTrace but not opt to share data, while others may trace too few guns to feel participation is warranted.

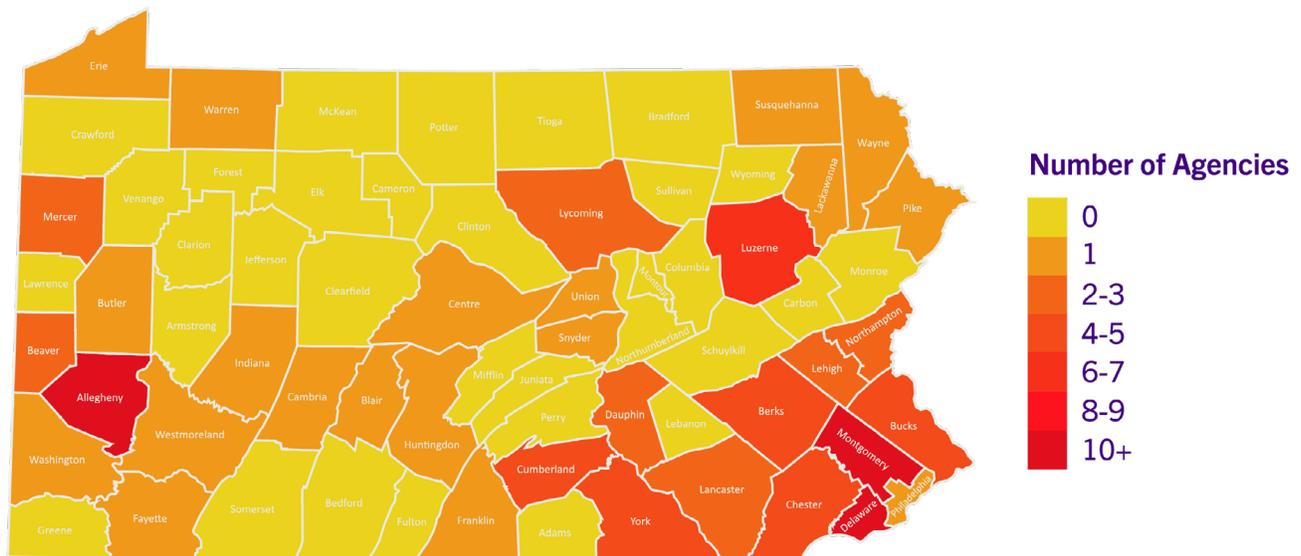
Since the 2019 launch, the number of Pennsylvania law enforcement agencies using eTrace has increased five percentage points, to 45% of the state's police agencies. These 501 agencies are scattered across the state; however, just 117 opt to share their data and allow other agencies to see their eTrace results. As shown in **Map A**, the agencies that have opted to share data are clustered in the southeast, around the Philadelphia metro area, and the far western counties of the

Pittsburgh metro area. Currently, 30 counties have no participating law enforcement agencies, including 11 counties that border neighboring states and which may be more at risk of cross-border gun trafficking.

## HOW BRADY MATCHED PENNSYLVANIA CRIME GUN DATA TO FFLS

The raw trace dataset that Brady downloaded from the Gun Tracing Analytics Platform on August 24, 2021, included a column named DEALER PHONE. We were able to cross-reference those phone numbers with the ATF's published lists of FFLs in Pennsylvania, which also include phone numbers. The ATF publishes a list of FFLs monthly; we used the January list for each year available between 2014 and 2020. Guns traced prior to 2014 will return a dealer name only if the dealer appears in the 2014-2020 ATF lists with the same phone number. For phone numbers that did not return a match, we used reverse directory, internet, and other searches to find the associated dealer

**MAP A: LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN PA OPTING TO SHARE ETRACE DATA**



business name, if possible. A portion of the older phone numbers could not be matched to a dealer name.

*NOTE: In all tables, when phone numbers returned a match in the ATF's lists of Pennsylvania FFLs from 2014-2020, the name of the dealer is in ALL CAPS. When a reverse directory was used to find the name of the dealer, the name is in normal case.*

## **DATA LIMITATIONS**

For several reasons, the gun tracing database is not a comprehensive picture of gun crime in Pennsylvania: Not all guns recovered by law enforcement are traced, and many guns that are used in crimes are never recovered by law enforcement. In addition, because over half of all Pennsylvania police agencies do not participate in eTrace — and even fewer share their trace data — the gun tracing database is not a complete count of either all crime guns or all traced crime guns recovered in Pennsylvania. In addition, not all agencies include all variables about the crime or recovery in the data they share. Finally, in many cases a trace cannot return complete information about a gun or its first purchase.

Because phone numbers are used to identify gun dealers in this analysis, not every gun can be matched to the original retail dealer, as some numbers in the database cannot be connected to a dealer. For example, a dealer's phone number may have changed and no longer matches the number in the database. In addition, older guns may have been purchased at dealers that are now closed. Because older traces are more difficult to match to dealers, some tables and charts in this analysis focus on more recent recoveries and “short time-

to-crime” firearms, as these matches are more likely to be accurate. Importantly, guns with a short time-to-crime are also more likely to be associated with gun trafficking, as explained in the introduction.

Despite these limitations, the Gun Tracing Analytics Platform paints the clearest picture of Pennsylvania crime guns and crime gun sources since the late 1990s/early 2000s.

# TRACE DATA AND SUPPLY-SIDE SOLUTIONS TO GUN VIOLENCE

Most efforts to prevent gun violence injuries and deaths focus on the perpetrators of violence. These demand-side efforts — whether public policy, criminal justice reform, local interventions, or social service programs — are necessary to save lives. Alone, however, they are insufficient to end America’s epidemic of gun violence.

A supply-side approach to gun violence prevention focuses on the supply of crime guns, encouraging elected officials, community members, and law enforcement to address not just the shooter, but also the supply chain and source of the gun.

By holding gun dealers, manufacturers, and distributors accountable when they act irresponsibly, local communities could reduce homicide and shooting rates in even the most impacted neighborhoods. In other words, a supply-side strategy is a critical aspect of a comprehensive public health approach to reducing gun violence.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THIS DATA? WHICH SUPPLY-SIDE SOLUTIONS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

**1. A small number of Pennsylvania dealers account for a majority of Pennsylvania crime guns.** This is consistent with the findings of prior national studies and indicates that the crime gun problem can be reduced significantly by

focusing on a small subset of specific dealers. As most dealers sell few or no crime guns, zeroing in on the dealers contributing to the crime gun problem allows for efficient and effective enforcement. Federal, state, and local authorities should give these specific dealers greater attention. Importantly, gun manufacturers must be pressured against supplying large crime gun dealers with firearms to transfer to the public.

**2. Philadelphia has a home-grown crime gun problem; to a lesser extent, so does Pittsburgh.** Each of these cities grapples with crime guns that mostly originate from dealers in that city. Local police and elected officials should be aware of these local crime gun sources and hold them accountable for contributing to their city’s gun crime problem. For example, law enforcement agencies in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh can partner with the ATF and other federal agencies to ensure firearms regulations and laws are enforced in their jurisdictions.

**3. Dealers with the most traces tend to be independent businesses, but aggregate traces to chain stores show that their sales practices also need improvement.** Dealers with large numbers of traces should implement stronger business practices to prevent sales to straw purchasers and/or gun traffickers. When dealers are part of large corporate chains, this implementation should be wide-scale across all locations. Doing so will have a measurable impact and benefit all areas of the state. These changes should be made proactively by the industry, without the prompting of government action — although legislatures can and should

codify such requirements if the industry fails to act voluntarily. For more information about safe gun industry business practices, see [Brady's Gun Dealer Code of Conduct](#).

**4. Crime guns circulate long after their dealers go out of business.** While improving and strengthening dealer business practices will eventually reduce the number of guns on the streets, the impact will take time to be felt, as guns are durable goods which can be used for many years. In the short term, focusing on the dealers making the largest contributions to the flow of crime guns is an effective strategy, but consistently enforcing state, local, and federal laws and regulations is imperative to ensuring more firearms are not added endlessly to the number of crime guns in circulation.

## **HOW WILL THESE SOLUTIONS LEAD TO FEWER GUN DEATHS AND INJURIES?**

Significant progress against gun trafficking and gun crime will be made if elected officials and law enforcement require better training of gun shop employees and ensure dealers are following

all laws and regulations. Because the federal government has failed to hold these dealers accountable (see case study on page 13), state and local governments must step in. Doing so is likely to change gun supplier behavior and business practices, which will result in fewer gun sales to gun traffickers and straw purchasers.

The evidence shows that changing dealer behavior will reduce the flow of guns into the illegal market. We know from criminal indictments, for example, that gun traffickers identify and choose stores where they can most easily conduct a straw purchase, then return to those stores again and again. We also know that the type of firearms a dealer sells can attract gun traffickers — and that if the most desirable guns are no longer sold, fewer of those guns will be recovered in crime.<sup>7</sup> Finally, we know that holding dealers accountable, either through greater enforcement<sup>8</sup> or legislation,<sup>9</sup> results in fewer crime gun traces to those dealers.

If fewer guns are available in the illegal market in a given city, the result is likely to be lower gun crime.<sup>10</sup>

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***A SUPPLY-SIDE STRATEGY IS A CRITICAL ASPECT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE.***

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# CASE STUDY:

## LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Firing Line, Inc., a Philadelphia business that specializes in police armaments, tactical equipment, firearms, and accessories, has had **1,803 crime guns** traced back to it, according to the gun tracing database. In business since 1984, this dealer was **inspected by the ATF** in 1992, 1993, 2000, 2004, 2012, 2014, and 2017. Except for the 2014 inspection, ATF investigators found similar violations in each of these years, including missing firearms and failure to submit required reports.

In addition to the high number of traces and violations, there are several other red flags that indicate Firing Line may have been — and might still be — supplying gun traffickers:

- Some firearms were discovered missing only due to the ATF’s inventory audit, indicating either a lack of inventory control or illegal off-the-books sales.
- The dealer was found to have “demonstrated willfulness in regards to facilitating the straw purchase of firearms,” meaning the dealer failed to prevent illegal sales to straw purchasers — and may have even purposefully enabled them.
- Firing Line was issued a “demand letter” for failing to respond to ATF trace requests within 24 hours, delaying criminal investigations.

The ATF investigator’s notes contain other alarming details. One of the background check forms inspected in 2017 had an “attached sheet of paper

containing hand-written notes describing the vehicle and driver of the car the female purchaser used to travel to and from the premise.” When asked about this, the dealer explained that the paper was a documentation of a sale they deemed suspicious. Inspection reports from 2005 and 2012 also included similar notes. When questioned about the practice in 2012, the dealer explained that “when a transaction seems suspicious, and involves a purchaser accompanied by another person who appears to be the actual buyer of the firearm, a store employee documents detailed information concerning the transaction.” At the time, the dealer also admitted that he “did not contact law enforcement concerning the sales before, or after, completing the transaction, and disclosed that documenting the suspicious transaction was sufficient enough on their part as an FFL.” These failures have likely contributed to Firing Line being the source of at least 1,477 traced crime guns from 2005 to 2020, the period in which these dangerous business practices were revealed in the ATF inspection reports.

After the 2017 inspection, the dealer was warned: “The records you are required to maintain and the business operations you conduct are important to law enforcement in our continuing efforts to reduce violent crime and protect the public. You failed to maintain accurate information in the Acquisition & Disposition record and account for [REDACTED] firearms, which were reported missing. You also failed to timely prepare and submit the ATF Form 5300.5, Report of Transactions, which is critical in tracing used firearms recovered in crimes. Furthermore, both violations were repetitive from past inspections and impact public safety.”

Although ATF considered revoking the dealer’s

license after the 2017 inspection, instead a warning conference was held in which the dealer was required to present a compliance plan. Because the inspection found signs of straw purchases — including one which resulted in a referral to law enforcement for further investigation — as well as evidence of knowingly facilitating straw purchases, during this meeting the ATF Special Agent in Charge “stressed the importance of being vigilant concerning any suspicious firearms sales,” and the dealer was given an ATF contact to consult specifically about any troubling potential purchases.

Since the 2017 inspection, another 399 guns have been traced to Firing Line, which ranks 7th among Pennsylvania dealers in terms of frequency of traced crime guns in the Gun Tracing Analytics Platform. Clearly, the dealer’s business practices have not changed enough as a result of the numerous ATF warning letters and warning conferences over the years, and public safety continues to be at risk as a result.

## FINDINGS: CRIME GUNS IN PENNSYLVANIA

The full Gun Tracing Analytics database includes 186,000 gun trace records, with the oldest record dating back to 1977 and the most recent occurring in 2020.

For each trace record, the database includes at least some data about:

- the gun, such as make and model;
- the crime, including date and location;
- the recovery, including date and location;
- the law enforcement agency requesting the trace; and
- the gun’s possessor at the time of recovery.

This report focuses primarily on the three most recent years of gun recoveries, as these years have the most robust and complete data for each trace, as well as the most participating law enforcement agencies. **Table 1** shows several descriptive features of the records in the database for these three years.

**TABLE 1: GUN TRACE RECORDS IN PENNSYLVANIA GUN TRACING DATABASE**

	2020	2019	2018
Total traces	10,133	10,451	9,625
Total law enforcement agencies (by FBI Originating Agency Identifier number)	153	135	134
Average number of traces per agency	66	79	73
Maximum traces from one agency	3,323 (PA State Police)	3,484 (PA State Police)	3,282 (PA State Police)
Minimum traces from one agency	1 (20 agencies)	1 (12 agencies)	1 (22 agencies)
Most common number of traces per agency	1	2	1
Median number of traces per agency	6	8	7
Traces to in-state dealers	5,940 (2,910 out-of-state)	6,322 (3,079 out-of-state)	5,865 (2,768 out-of-state)
Traces to active dealers	5,721	3,978	3,534
Traces with Time to Crime of 3 years or less	3,392	3,163	2,943
Traces with Time to Crime of less than 1 year	1,880	1,328	1,254
Traces of Handguns	8,088 (1,991 Long guns)	8,122 (2,221 Long guns)	7,464 (2,073 Long guns)
Traces of firearms used in violent crime	1,322	1,328	1,293
Used in homicide	321	269	216
Used in assault	848	843	854
Used in robbery	137	173	200
Traces of firearms possessed illegally	2,357	2,270	1,911
Traces of firearms recovered due to suspicion of being trafficked	377	397	397

Despite the varying number of law enforcement agencies reflected in the database each year, there is remarkable consistency across the most recent three years, likely because nearly one-third of the records result from traces conducted by one agency: the Pennsylvania State Police. For example, in each year the majority of guns are traced to in-state dealers. In addition, the number of guns that may have been trafficked is similar in each year, as measured by short time-to-crime of three years or less. The types of crimes that resulted in the guns' recovery are fairly consistent

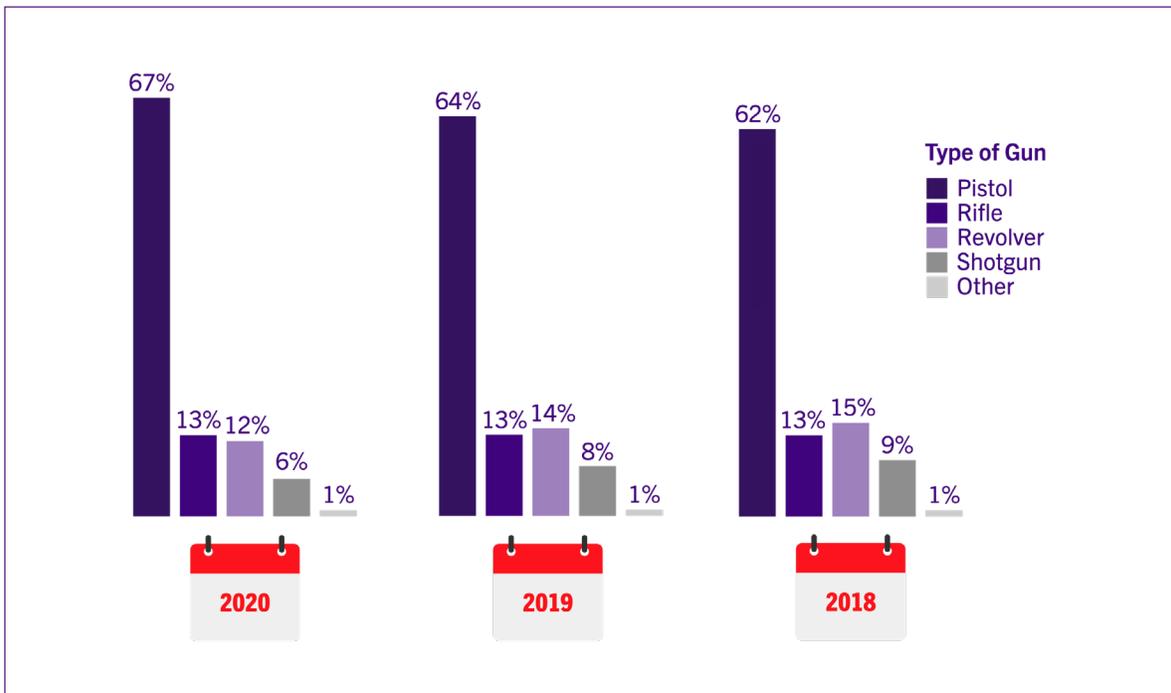
across years, as well. This consistency means that the data is likely to be more reliable and accurate than if there were greater variation across years.

## WHAT TYPES OF GUNS ARE RECOVERED AND TRACED?

Looking at traces from 2018 to 2020, the most “typical” gun recovered in Pennsylvania is a 9mm pistol made by Smith & Wesson.

Chart A shows the frequency of each type of gun recovered by year. Handguns (pistols, revolvers, and derringers) make up just under 80% of all traced guns. Handguns are likely to be popular among gun traffickers due to their smaller size and easy concealability, yet many handguns, particularly semi-automatic handguns, have just as much firepower — and can shoot just as many rounds — as larger guns.

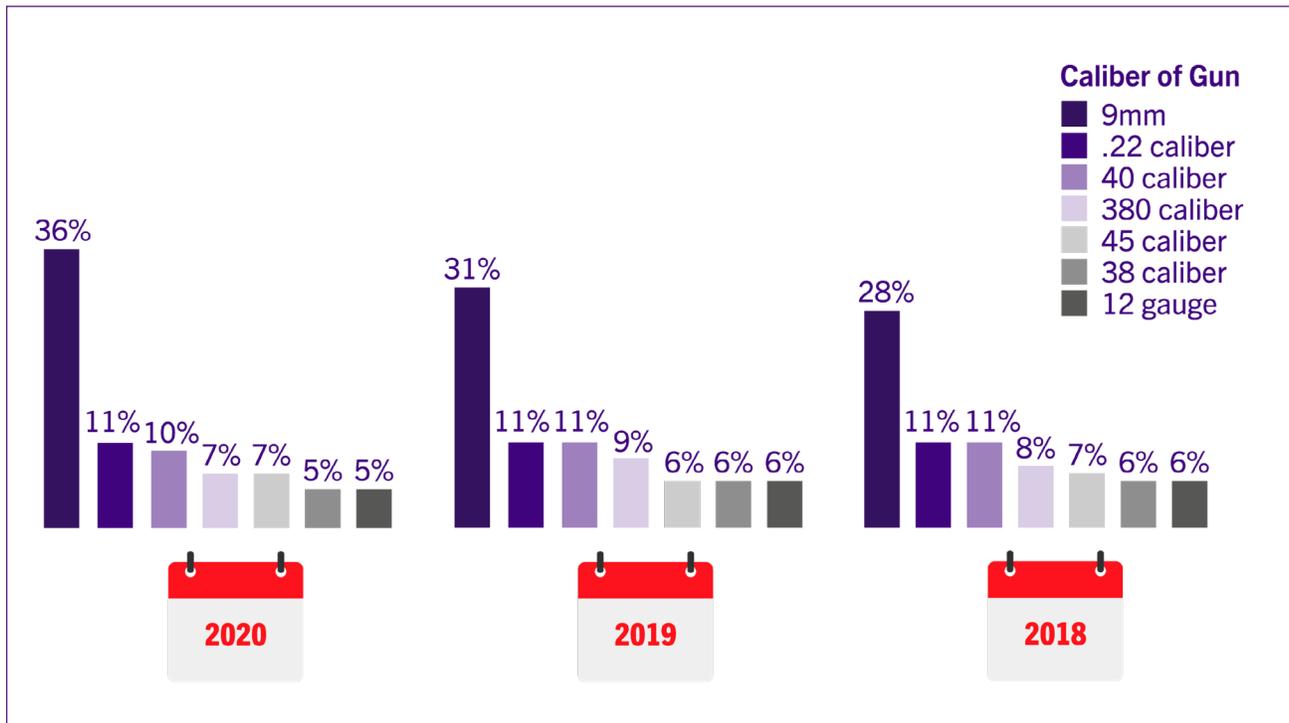
**CHART A: TRACED GUNS IN PENNSYLVANIA BY FIREARM TYPE (2018-2020)**



**Chart B** shows the most frequent calibers of traced guns each year, with 9mm being the most common in all years, significantly more than the second most frequently traced firearms (.22 caliber). Caliber is used to describe the size of a rifle or handgun bore (the internal barrel measurement) and the size of cartridges (bullets) designed for different bores. Most easily described as the size

of bullets, caliber is often a delineation of potential lethality or destructive capabilities. For example, a 9mm caliber bullet hits with more impact and is considered both more lethal and destructive than a .22 caliber bullet (although both are lethal). Caliber differentiation can also indicate whether a specific firearm is a rifle or a handgun.

## CHART B: TRACED GUNS IN PENNSYLVANIA BY FIREARM CALIBER (2018-2020)



Finally, the data reveals the make and manufacturer of guns recovered and traced by law enforcement. Not surprisingly, popular handgun manufacturers are at the top of the frequency chart, but the database includes firearms from 63 different gunmakers.

**Table 2** lists the 2018-2020 top 20 most frequently recovered and traced firearms by manufacturer. Guns made by Smith & Wesson, Glock, Taurus, and Ruger are recovered and traced at rates substantially higher than the next most common makes of firearms.

Most of the top manufacturers of recovered and traced firearms in the database are based in the U.S., except Glock, HS Produkt, and Walther, which are European companies. In addition, Beretta Pietro (Italy) and Beretta USA both appear in the database, but only Beretta USA appears among the top 19.

**TABLE 2: MANUFACTURERS OF MOST FREQUENTLY TRACED FIREARMS**

MANUFACTURER	2020	2019	2018
Smith & Wesson	1,396	1,459	1,522
Glock	1,311	1,203	1,000
Taurus	1,120	1,137	1,011
Ruger	879	998	906
HS Produkt	327	290	265
Remington	275	341	289
SIG Sauer	265	206	198
<i>Unknown</i>	197	285	178
Savage	182	206	206
Marlin	181	206	183
Mossberg	167	203	229
SCCY Industries	150	120	136
Walther	150	124	125
Beretta USA	144	147	127
Hi-Point	144	184	184
Harrington and Richardson (ceased production in 2015)	143	180	231
Colt	141	171	178
Winchester	131	145	172
Keltec	127	142	155

Knowing the makes, models, and calibers of the most frequently recovered crime guns provides insight into the preferred firearms of the criminal market. This information is important to share with gun dealers so that they can exercise especial diligence in transferring such firearms. It is also important information for manufacturers, who should make every effort to avoid designing, pricing, and/or marketing firearms in ways that appeal to the criminal market.

One case in point includes a set of manufacturers that produced popular low-quality, cheap (less than \$150<sup>11</sup>), short-barrel handguns in the 1990s, commonly called “Saturday Night Specials” or

“junk” guns. Trace data from the time showed that these guns were used in a disproportionate amount of gun crime.

While the lowest-priced handguns from the top makers now retail around \$400 (although Keltec has a current model with a list price of \$199), some cheap handguns from the Saturday Night Specials era are unfortunately still on the streets and being used in crime, as shown in **Table 3**, which lists guns in the gun tracing database made by the most notorious “junk” firearm firms. Even in the most recent three years, between 300 and 500 of these inexpensive firearms have been recovered and traced.

While these manufacturers were held accountable — and mostly driven out of business — by legislatures and the courts for the damage caused

by their firearms, the guns themselves have not yet fallen completely out of circulation.

**TABLE 3: TRACED “SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIALS” BY YEAR**

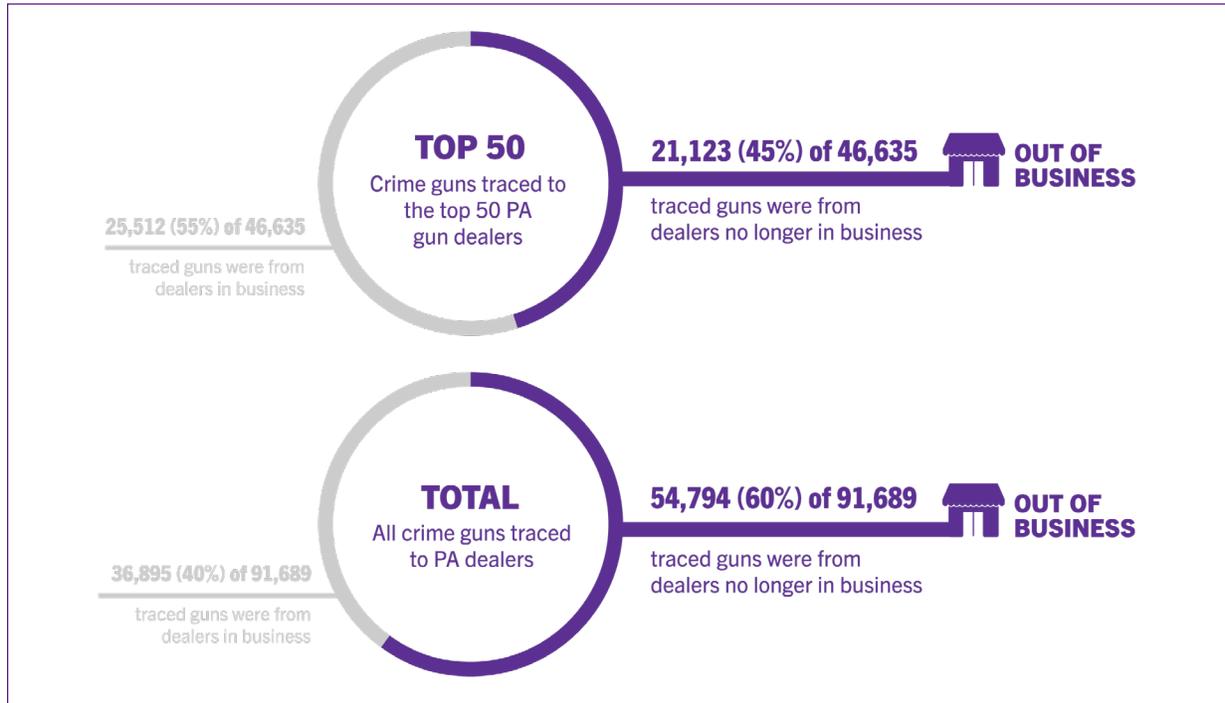
MANUFACTURER	2020	2019	2018
Bryco Arms (ceased production in 2003)	41	86	68
Raven Arms (destroyed by fire 1991)	41	63	57
Jimenez Arms (ceased production in 2006)	38	59	49
Lorcin Engineering (ceased production in 1998)	0	33	48
Davis Industries (closed in 1992)	38	53	45
Phoenix Arms (still in business)	34	60	45
Jennings Firearms (closed in 1991)	25	27	0
Hi-Point Firearms (still in business)	144	184	184
Sundance Industries (closed in 2002)	1	3	0

Brady filed a lawsuit against manufacturer Hi-Point Firearms in 2005, representing Daniel Williams. Williams was shot and injured with a trafficked handgun in a drive-by shooting in Buffalo, NY, at age 16 while he played basketball near his home. The lawsuit won critical precedent-setting victories: the first New York appellate decision holding that a gun manufacturer, distributor, and dealer can be held liable for a criminal shooting; one of the first decisions in the nation holding that the federal gun industry protection law, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), does not provide gun companies with the sweeping immunity they claim; and a landmark summary judgment ruling that the gun distributor violated federal law in the sale.

Because guns are durable goods, they can have a longer life than the store from which they were purchased. In fact, of the 91,689 crime guns in the database traced to Pennsylvania dealers, 60% were traced to an original sale by a dealer that is no longer in business, as shown in **Chart C**. Yet of the 46,635 guns traced to the top 50 Pennsylvania dealers that appear most frequently in the

database, only 45% were traced to dealers that are now closed, indicating that today’s dealers are still contributing significantly to the flow of crime guns.

## CHART C: TOTAL GUNS TRACED TO DEALERS NO LONGER IN BUSINESS V.S. IN BUSINESS



# GHOST GUNS

## GHOST GUNS ARE RISING IN POPULARITY

Ghost guns are unserialized and untraceable firearms that can be bought online and assembled at home. They consist of an “80% lower receiver” — which refers to a part of a gun that has not yet reached the stage of manufacture to be legally considered a firearm by the government — plus the remaining gun components. They are often sold as “ghost gun kits,” which include all of the parts, and sometimes the equipment, necessary to build a fully functioning firearm at home. These kits are widely available and can be purchased by anyone, including prohibited purchasers, domestic abusers, and gun traffickers — without a background check. Because they are made to be untraceable, such firearms are not found in this database of traced guns. However, by searching across several variables, we found evidence of their growing proliferation.

The database includes 5,181 guns for which the manufacturer is listed as “unknown.” Just 82 of these guns were traced to a dealer; most appear to be foreign-made, antiques, in poor condition, or otherwise unable to be traced, based on comments in the “notes” field. However, six were noted to be “handmade,” one was noted as a “ghost gun,” and four were noted as “80% receivers.” Additionally, 13 guns were noted to be “Polymer80.”

Polymer80 is a ghost gun kit manufacturer whose kits are sold online across the country. The database also includes 126 guns with Polymer80 listed as the manufacturer. In total, the 139 Polymer80 guns listed illustrate their exponential growth of popularity, as none appeared prior to 2018, and only one was recovered in 2018. In 2019,

18 were recovered; in 2020, the number shot up to 120.

In the field for Firearm Type Description, 68 guns are listed as “receiver/frame.” Eight of these receivers have unknown manufacturers; five were made by Polymer80. The others were all products of firearm manufacturers. The pattern of recoveries for these receivers also indicates growing popularity, with five or fewer recovered in any given year prior to 2017. Since then, nine were recovered in 2017 and in 2018, ten in 2019, and 21 in 2020.

### Ghost Guns

Top: Ghost gun kit purchased for \$400 cash at a gun show, without a background check or a bill of sale; Middle: Polymer80 ghost gun kit; Bottom: Glock 17 (9 mm) ghost gun clone shown mostly assembled at a gun show



# FINDINGS: FIREARMS DEALERS AND INDICATORS OF GUN TRAFFICKING

This report focuses only on the dealers in the Gun Tracing Analytics database that are located in Pennsylvania. These 4,318 dealers account for 91,689 traces, or about half of the total traces in the database. The rest are traced to unknown or out-of-state dealers and are not reflected in our analysis.

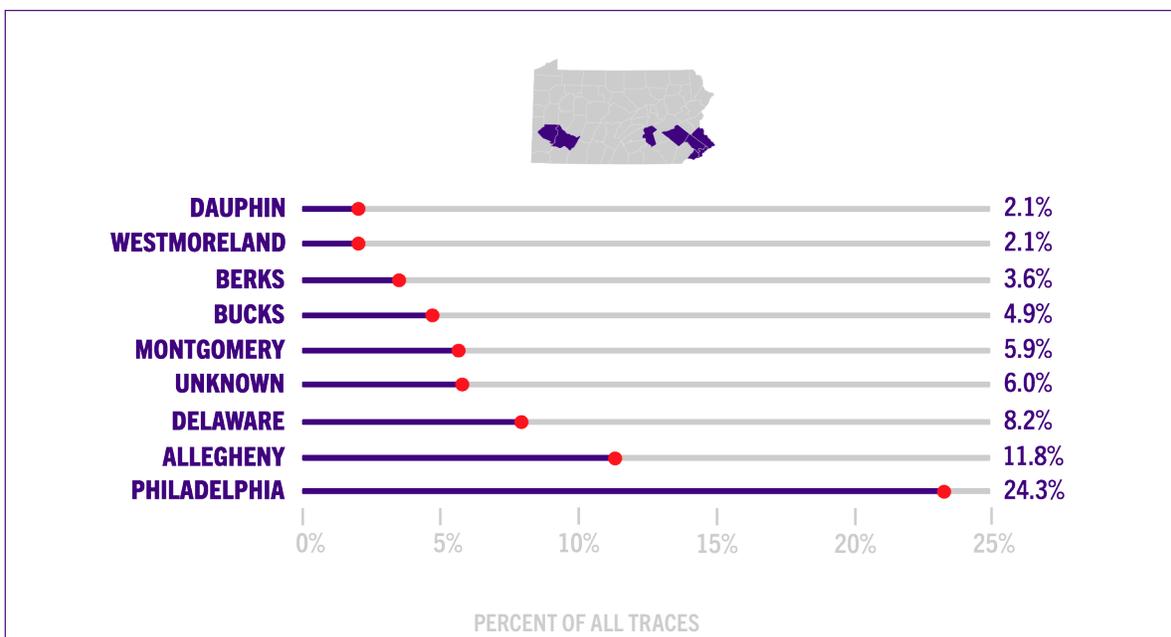
The largest number of traces attributable to a single dealer is 3,652, while 1,682 dealers appear in the database with only one traced gun attributed to them. The average number of traces per dealer in the database is 21; the median is two. These

numbers do not include the many Pennsylvania dealers with zero crime gun traces, because those dealers do not appear in the database.

Because past trace data on the national level has indicated that very few dealers are the source of the majority of crime guns, we were interested in testing whether that trend holds true today. Indeed, 50% of the crime guns in the database traced to in-state dealers were sold by just 1% of the dealers, while 90% of the crime guns were sold by 20% of the dealers. Thus, there is a small concentration of dealers contributing to the crime gun problem.

Furthermore, these dealers are concentrated geographically. **Chart D** depicts the Pennsylvania counties to which 70% of crime guns can be traced. While the counties in which Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are located have the greatest frequency of traces, most of the rest are in the southeast around the Philadelphia metro area.

**CHART D: DISTRIBUTION OF DEALERS WITH TRACES BY COUNTY**



## PITTSBURGH AND PHILADELPHIA AS SOURCES OF CRIME GUNS

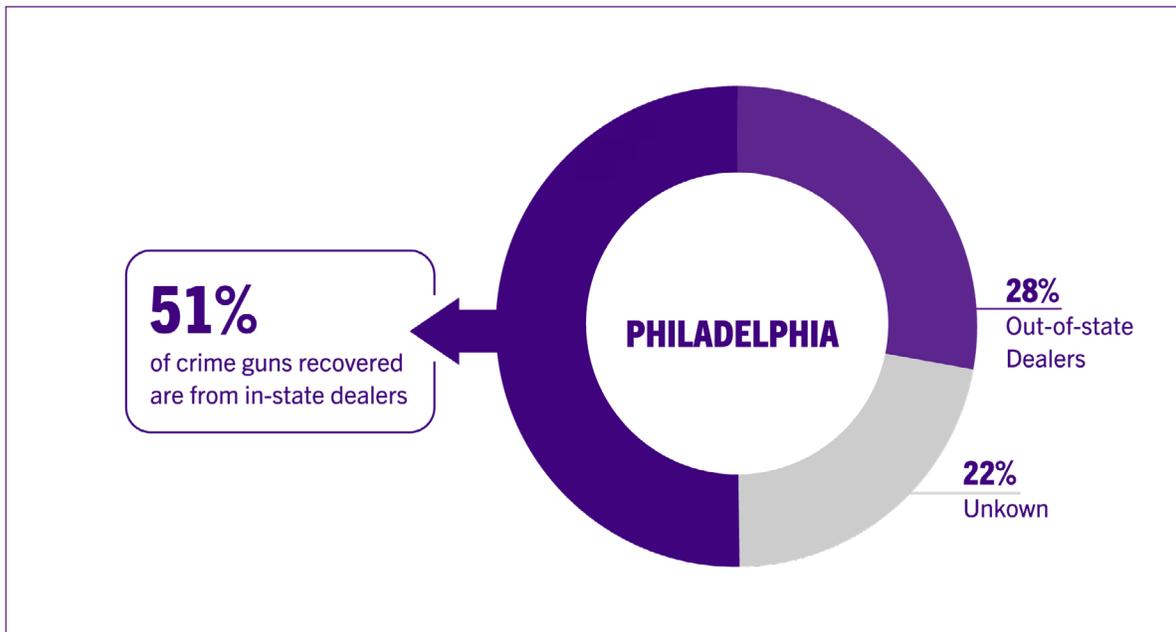
Because the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh metro areas are where the majority of crime gun suppliers are concentrated, we looked more closely into the supply of guns to those two cities. Both sit near the state border, so we expanded our analysis to include all traces, even those that were traced to dealers out-of-state.

To capture the most complete picture of crime guns in Philadelphia, we counted all guns recovered in zip codes belonging to the city of Philadelphia, which resulted in a total of 66,104 guns represented in the database. These weapons were recovered by several different law enforcement agencies, including the Pennsylvania Attorney General and the Pennsylvania State Police; however, the Philadelphia Police Department recovered 99% of these guns.

Table 4 on the next page lists the source dealers responsible for at least 200 guns recovered in Philadelphia over all years captured in the database.

While Philadelphia-area dealers tend to be the highest-volume dealers represented in the database, when all guns recovered in the city are analyzed, 49% come from out-of-state or unknown dealers, as seen in **Chart E**.

**CHART E: ORIGIN OF CRIME GUNS RECOVERED IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**



**TABLE 4: ALL DEALERS APPEARING AT LEAST 200 TIMES IN TRACES OF GUNS RECOVERED IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

# OF TRACES	DEALER NAME	IN BUSINESS?	YEAR CLOSED	CITY
2842	Colosimo's	N	2009	PHILADELPHIA
2356	PHILADELPHIA TRAINING ACADEMY INC	Y		PHILADELPHIA
1808	LOCKS PHILADELPHIA GUN EXCHANGE	Y		PHILADELPHIA
1653	DELIAS GUN SHOP	Y		PHILADELPHIA
1601	Lou's Jewelry & Pawn	Y but no FFL	2006	UPPER DARBY
1359	Shooter Shop	N	?	PHILADELPHIA
1286	FIRING LINE INC	Y		PHILADELPHIA
1006	MIKE & KATES SPORT SHOPPE	Y		PHILADELPHIA
976	C & C Sports Center	N	?	PHILADELPHIA
816	<i>Unidentifiable dealer</i>	N	?	
664	SUBURBAN ARMORY, THE	Y		COLLINGDALE
581	Fishtown Lock & Gun	N	?	PHILADELPHIA
557	Britt's Security Programs	N	2009	PHILADELPHIA
553	Abington Gun Sports	N	2013	ABINGTON
497	<i>Unidentifiable dealer</i>	N	?	
442	TARGETMASTER	Y		CHADDS FORD
359	Archery Gun & Outfitters	N	?	MONTGOMERYVILLE
323	TANNERS SPORTS CENTER INC	Y		JAMISON
320	CLASSIC PISTOL	Y		SOUTHAMPTON
290	Donn's Gun Room	N	2004	MONTGOMERYVILLE
281	CLAYTONS RANGE	Y		HORSHAM
277	S C GUNS, INC	Y		FEASTERVILLE
233	<i>Unidentifiable dealer</i>	N	?	
224	DELAWARE VALLEY SPORTS CTR INC	Y		PHILADELPHIA
221	FRENCH CREEK OUTFITTERS INC	N	2020	PHOENIXVILLE

*Note: Traces to manufacturers or law enforcement agencies are not included in this table.*

For Pittsburgh, the database contains 21,661 crime guns recovered in zip codes fully or partially within the Steel City. Of these, 94% were traced by the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. Other law enforcement agencies with traces of guns recovered in Pittsburgh include the Allegheny County Police Department, the Allegheny County District Attorney, and the Pennsylvania State Police.

As seen in **Table 5**, through all the years captured in the database there are fewer gun dealers with 200 or more crime guns recovered in Pittsburgh than in Philadelphia, but the cities are alike in that many of their high-volume dealers are located in the metro area.

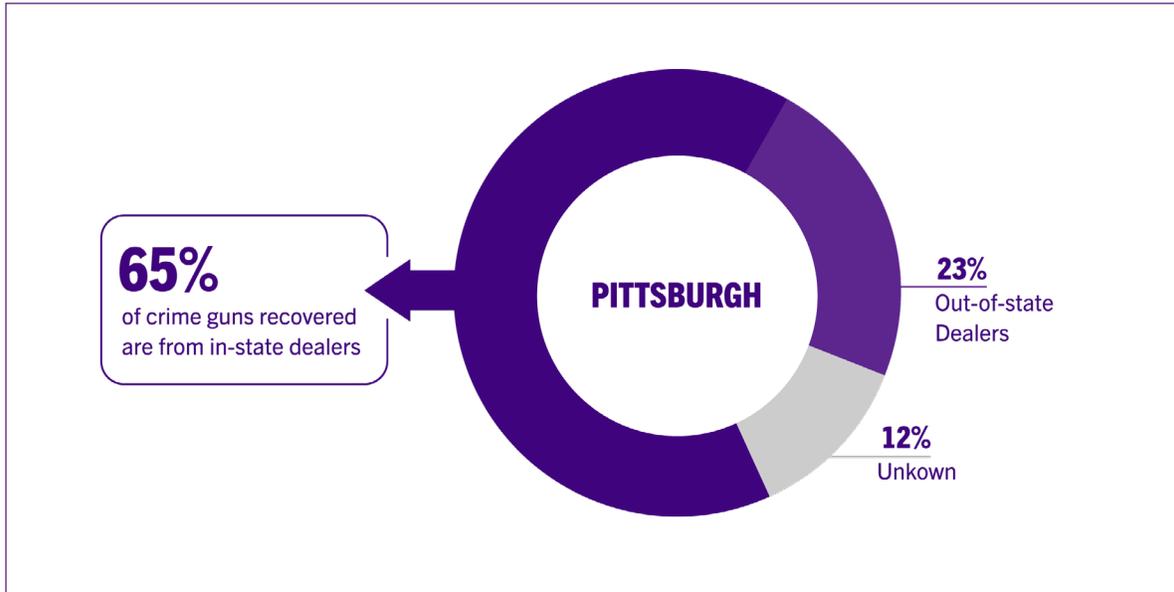
Guns recovered in Pittsburgh are traced to in-state dealers at a rate of 65%, as seen in **Chart F**.

**TABLE 5: ALL DEALERS APPEARING AT LEAST 200 TIMES IN TRACES OF GUNS RECOVERED IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH**

# OF TRACES	DEALER NAME	IN BUSINESS?	YEAR CLOSED	CITY
1455	ANTHONY ARMS & ACCESSORIES	N	2020	WEST MIFFLIN
1409	BRAVERMAN ARMS CO INC	N	2017	WILKINSBURG
459	NORTH EASTERN UNIFORMS & EQUIP INC	Y		PITTSBURGH
416	ACE SPORTING GOODS	Y		WASHINGTON
341	SPORTSMANS SUPPLY CO	Y		BUTLER
300	POWELL GUNS LLC	Y		PITTSBURGH
250	GANDER MOUNTAIN #206	N	2017	WEST MIFFLIN
225	Bale's Sales	N	?	PITTSBURGH
219	ISLAND FIREARMS INC	Y		PITTSBURGH
216	MARKL SUPPLY COMPANY INC	Y		PITTSBURGH
208	ALLEGHENY RIVER ARSENAL INC	N	2011	VERONA

*Note: Traces to manufacturers or law enforcement agencies are not included in this table.*

## CHART F: ORIGIN OF CRIME GUNS RECOVERED IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH



### DEALERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MOST TRACES

Table 6 lists the 31 Pennsylvania gun stores that appear most often in the full dataset of 91,689 guns traced to in-state dealers. Nearly half of these stores are closed or no longer selling firearms. Most

are located in the southeastern region of the state. The majority are independent stores, but two are part of the large national Cabela's/Bass Pro Shops chain.

**TABLE 6: TOP PENNSYLVANIA GUN STORES SELLING RECOVERED CRIME GUNS**

RANK	TRACES	DEALER NAME	IN BUSINESS?	YEAR CLOSED	LICENSE NAME IF DIFFERENT THAN DEALER NAME	DEALER CITY
1	3652	Colosimo's	N	2009		PHILADELPHIA
2	3376	PHILADELPHIA TRAINING ACADEMY INC	Y		PHILADELPHIA TRAINING ACADEMY INC	PHILADELPHIA
3	2644	DELIAS GUN SHOP	Y		MAD MINUTE ENTERPRISES LLC	PHILADELPHIA
4	2573	LOCKS PHILADELPHIA GUN EXCHANGE	Y		LOCK, VIRGINIA T	PHILADELPHIA
5	2012	Lou's Jewelry & Pawn	Y but no FFL	2006		UPPER DARBY

6	1849	ANTHONY ARMS & ACCESSORIES	N	2020	RAY ANTHONY SHOOTING SPORTS INC	WEST MIFFLIN
7	1803	FIRING LINE INC	Y		FIRING LINE INC	PHILADELPHIA
8	1751	BRAVERMAN ARMS CO INC	N	2017	BRAVERMAN ARMS CO INC	WILKINSBURG
9	1690	Shooter Shop	N	?		PHILADELPHIA
10	1450	MIKE & KATES SPORT SHOPPE	Y		PANAMARENKO, MICHAEL P	PHILADELPHIA
11	1371	CABELA'S 409	Y		CABELA'S WHOLESALE, LLC	HAMBURG
12	1189	C & C Sports Center	N	?		PHILADELPHIA
13	1149	TARGETMASTER	Y		TOMMY GUN INC	CHADDS FORD
14	1131	<i>UNKNOWN</i>	N	?		
15	1104	SUBURBAN ARMORY, THE	Y		GALIAN INC	COLLINGDALE
16	812	ARMY & NAVY STORE	Y		KAYTON CO	WHITEHALL
17	772	ACE SPORTING GOODS	Y		ACE SPORTING GOODS INC	WASHINGTON
18	716	Fishtown Lock & Gun	N	?		PHILADELPHIA
19	704	Abington Gun Sports	N	2013		ABINGTON
20	696	GRICE WHOLESALE	Y		GRICE GUN SHOP INC	CLEARFIELD
21	694	Britt's Security Programs	N	2009		PHILADELPHIA
22	677	TANNERS SPORTS CENTER INC	Y		TANNERS SPORTS CENTER INC	JAMISON
23	646	<i>UNKNOWN</i>	N	?		
24	586	SPORTSMANS SUPPLY CO INC	Y		SPORTSMENS SUPPLY CORP	BUTLER
25	509	CLAYTON'S HUNTING & FISHING INC	Y		CLAYTONS RANGE INC	HORSHAM
25	509	KOSTARAS INC	Y		JLN RANGES LLC	SOUTHAMPTON
26	505	FRENCH CREEK OUTFITTERS INC	N	2020	FRENCH CREEK OUTFITTERS INC	PHOENIXVILLE
27	502	BASS PRO OUTDOOR WORLD LLC	Y		BASS PRO OUTDOOR WORLD LLC	HARRISBURG
28	486	Pitt Loan	N	2008		PITTSBURGH
29	478	DELAWARE VALLEY SPORTS CTR INC	Y		DELAWARE VALLEY SPORTS CTR INC	PHILADELPHIA
30	464	Archery Gun & Outfitters	N	?		MONTGOMERYVILLE

# CASE STUDY:

## LEADING SUPPLIER OF PHILADELPHIA CRIME GUNS LOSES LICENSE<sup>12</sup>

The story of Lou's Jewelry and Loan (now Lou's Jewelry and Pawn) shows the impact of taking legal action against a reckless gun dealer.

Once ranked with the most crime gun traces in Pennsylvania,<sup>13</sup> Lou's was able to operate for 20 years despite repeatedly selling multiple guns to gun traffickers and felons, flooding the streets of Philadelphia with crime guns, and profiting from every deadly sale. Lou's supplied straw purchasers and traffickers, including Saad Abdul Salaam, who in turn supplied a co-conspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Guns from Lou's were used by criminals and juveniles in all manner of violent acts, from the killing of police officer Lauretha Vaird by a bank robber to the killing of 14-year-old Anthony Oliver, Jr. In 2004, Anthony was killed with a gun that Lou's sold to a trafficker. Anthony's parents had enough; they brought a civil lawsuit against Lou's. Brady represented Anthony's

parents, a settlement was reached, and the ATF revoked Lou's license on July 31, 2006.

It's clear why Lou's was popular with gun traffickers. According to one convicted trafficker, Lou's, unlike other gun stores, asked no questions about his gun purchases: "The salesman didn't ask me anything. He didn't ask like, 'What type of sport you go after?' or 'Is you a hunter?' He said nothing, it was like no interest." At other gun stores, this trafficker experienced a barrage of questions when attempting to buy a gun: "They asked you, 'What's it for?' And, 'What game you're going for?' Questions like that."

Did revoking Lou's license improve public safety? According to the Pennsylvania gun trace data, it appears likely. From 2000 through 2006, the year of revocation, Lou's was associated with 1,188 traced guns — an average of 170 crime guns each year. Between 2007 and 2013, however, the number of guns traced to Lou's dropped to 548 — an average of 78 crime guns per year.

**Table 7** presents aggregate traces from chain stores. Nearly all of these chains include stores in other states as well, but the trace count includes only their Pennsylvania locations. The chain with the most traces in the database, Gander Mountain (now Gander Outdoors), currently has only one store in the state and does not sell firearms, meaning the traces are all due to a prior license. Cabela's and Bass Pro Shops have merged, but are treated separately here because most of these sales occurred prior to that event.

**TABLE 7: TOP CHAIN STORES IN PENNSYLVANIA SELLING RECOVERED CRIME GUNS**

TOTAL TRACES	CHAIN	IN BUSINESS?	RANK IF COUNTED AS SINGLE STORE
2244	CWI/GANDER MOUNTAIN COMPANY	Y but no FFL	5
1371	CABELA'S WHOLESALE INC	Y	11
1148	DICK'S SPORTING GOODS INC	Y	14
917	WAL-MART STORES	Y	16
792	DUNHAM'S ATHLEISURE CORP	Y	17
759	Kmart	N	18
503	BASS PRO OUTDOOR WORLD LLC	Y	27
444	DUNKELBERGER'S SPORTS OUTFITTER	Y	36
200	OFFICER STORE/PENNSYLVANIA POLICE SUPPLY	Y	70
194	ATLANTIC TACTICAL INC	Y	72
170	RURAL KING HOLDINGS LLP	Y	80

## CASE STUDY: LIMITATIONS OF THE DATABASE

In 2020, Montgomery County officials arrested Daniel Lucas after he had purchased 36 firearms from 16 Pennsylvania gun dealers across eight counties over 77 days that summer and fall. His prolific gun purchasing from across the state had come to the county's attention during a routine investigation of paperwork submitted by local gun dealers regarding sales of multiple guns to single purchasers. As none of the guns were in his possession at the time of his arrest, he was charged with various state crimes related to gun trafficking and straw purchasing.

Table 8 below shows the dealers from which he made his purchases and the total number of traces to each in the database. Of the 16 dealers, seven are among the top 50 crime gun dealers in the state. However, only one of the guns purchased by Mr. Lucas was recovered and would subsequently appear in the gun tracing database. That gun was found by Philadelphia police in the possession of two underaged people during a traffic stop. All of the other 35 guns remain unaccounted for and are not reflected in any dealer's total tally in the gun tracing database.

In addition, four of the dealers Lucas patronized, as listed in the criminal complaint, do not appear

in the database at all. That could be because they have not previously sold any guns used in crime — or because any crime guns they may have sold were traced by law enforcement agencies that do not participate in the data-sharing.

Thus, this case highlights some of the limitations of the Gun Tracing Analytics dataset. While certainly telling us much about the behavior of many gun dealers, the types of crime guns in Pennsylvania, and other important information, it is not a complete picture of the total number of crime guns or dealers.

The case also illustrates another important point: Many of the dealers Daniel Lucas visited had an opportunity to prevent harm. In fact, five of his attempted purchases were denied by dealers, yet it does not appear that any informed law enforcement at the time. Mr. Lucas’ first purchase was nine days after he turned 21 (and legally able to possess a handgun). He bought four of the exact same make and model handguns from Trop Gun Shop. Had that dealer denied the sale and immediately notified local law enforcement of this highly suspicious attempted purchase, perhaps the buying spree could have been stopped before it started.

**TABLE 8: GUN DEALERS VISITED BY DANIEL LUCAS IN 2020**

COUNTY	PURCHASES	DEALERS	DEALER TOTAL CRIME GUNS
Lancaster	13	Trop Gun Shop	432
		Lanco Tactical	23
		Kinsey's Archery Products	unknown
Montgomery	4	In-Site Firearms	243
		Treeline Sports, Inc.	245
		King's Shooters Supply	92
Chester	5	Target Shooting Solutions	unknown
		Tri-State Tactical	7
Delaware	2	Targetmaster	1149
Philadelphia	1	Philadelphia Training Academy	3376
Bucks	9	Tanner's Sports Center	677
		Johnston's Sporting Goods	298
		Surplus City (SC Guns, Inc)	412
		Auger Precision Firearms	unknown
Berks	1	Cabela's	1371
Schuykill	1	Scott's Guns & Ammo	unknown

## DEALERS CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTING TO THE CRIME GUN PROBLEM

Of the 91,689 guns traced to Pennsylvania dealers in the database, 40,783, or 44%, were recovered three years or less after they were first transferred. As explained in the introduction, these short “time-to-crime” (TTC) guns are more likely to have been bought in a straw purchase or for the purposes of gun trafficking than guns with longer TTC. Half of the short TTC guns in the database were recovered in Philadelphia; 15% were recovered in Pittsburgh. Both Reading and Harrisburg recovered roughly 1,100 (2.7%) short TTC guns.

The dealers who have the highest volumes of short TTC guns tend to be the same dealers who sell large quantities of crime guns in general — and, like crime guns overall, it is a small percentage of

dealers who account for the majority of short TTC guns. Of the 1,675 dealers with at least one short TTC gun traced, just 26 account for half of all crime guns recovered in three years or less — 20,197 guns. Many of these merchants are in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh metro areas

**Table 9** focuses on dealers who are currently at the greatest risk of contributing to gun trafficking — in other words, those with the most short TTC guns recovered in 2020. The 3,067 crime guns recovered in 2020 with a TTC of 3 years or less were sold by 507 dealers (12% of the dealers in the database), and the 1,646 crime guns recovered in 2020 with a TTC of under a year were sold by 330 dealers — which means that just 8% of the dealers in the database were the source of all the database’s 2020 crime guns recovered less than 12 months after the original sale.

**TABLE 9: TOP DEALERS WITH RECOVERIES IN 2020 OF SHORT TIME-TO-CRIME GUNS**

DEALER NAME	TOTAL 2020 TRACES TTC 3 YRS OR LESS	RANK	TOTAL 2020 TRACES TTC <1 YR	RANK	CITY
DELIAS GUN SHOP	197	1	130	1	PHILADELPHIA
PHILADELPHIA TRAINING ACADEMY	115	2	84	2	PHILADELPHIA
LOCKS PHILADELPHIA GUN EXCHANGE	94	3	41	5	PHILADELPHIA
FRANKS GUN SHOP	83	4	48	3	PHILADELPHIA
MIKE & KATES SPORT SHOPPE	79	5	44	4	PHILADELPHIA
CABELA'S	74	6	30	9	HAMBURG
TARGETMASTER	61	7	37	7	CHADDS FORD
DELAWARE VALLEY SPORTS CTR INC	59	8	40	6	PHILADELPHIA
TANNERS SPORTS CENTER INC	58	9	35	8	JAMISON

FIRING LINE INC	57	10	30	9	PHILADELPHIA
ANTHONY ARMS & ACCESSORIES	56	11	22	13	WEST MIFFLIN
SUBURBAN ARMORY, THE	52	12	22	13	COLLINGDALE
TREELINE SPORTS INC	48	13	30	9	NORRISTOWN
BASS PRO SHOPS #026	44	14	25	11	HARRISBURG
DUNHAM'S SPORTS #9079	43	15	20	15	DU BOIS
TROP GUN SHOP LTD	37	16	23	12	ELIZABETHTOWN
GUNS PRICED RIGHT	37	16	21	14	DRAVOSBURG
THE BUNKER GUN SHOP	35	17	29	10	WARMINSTER
CLAYTON'S HUNTING & FISHING INC	29	18	15	18	HORSHAM
DUNHAMS DISCOUNT SPORTS #9029	27	19	21	14	PITTSBURGH
GRICE GUN SHOP INC	26	20	7	26	CLEARFIELD
DOUBLE ACTION INC	25	21	2	31	YEADON
CONNELLSVILLE RURAL KING SUPPLY	23	22	13	20	CONNELLSVILLE
PIESTRAKS GUN SHOP	22	23	6	27	NANTICOKE
INSITE FIREARMS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPLIES	22	23	16	17	JEFFERSONVILLE
S P A R FIREARMS	22	23	14	19	MECHANICSBURG
ALLEGHENY GUN WORKS	21	24	16	17	BETHEL PARK
PITTSBURGH FFL	20	25	16	17	MCKEESPORT
CLASSIC PISTOL	19	26	14	19	SOUTHAMPTON
DUSTY RHOADS	17	28	17	16	NORWOOD
JOHNSTON'S SPORTING GOODS LLC	17	28	16	17	CROYDON

Some portion of these short time-to-crime guns were likely obtained in individual sales of multiple guns, which is also an indicator of potential gun trafficking. In 2020, 330 of the recovered crime guns with a TTC of three years or less were purchased in a multiple-gun buy. The database indicates that Piestraks Gun Shop, for example, sold 22 guns with a short TTC, 13 of which were sold in multiple-gun buys. More research on the multiple-gun purchases in the Gun Tracing Analytics database is needed.

# CASE STUDY:

## IN SITE FIREARMS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT SUPPLIES

Since 1999, a total of 266 guns in the dataset have been traced to In Site Firearms in Jeffersonville. In 2014, Brady filed a lawsuit against In Site on behalf of the estate and wife of police officer Bradley Fox, who was shot and killed by a person who was legally prohibited from possessing a firearm due to a felony conviction. The gun used in the shooting had been acquired via straw purchaser at In Site just three and a half months before Officer Fox was killed. The purchaser had acted as a straw buyer for the gunman to buy at least nine guns, including six purchased at In Site over a period of four months.

Brady's suit alleged that In Site should have known the sales were straw purchases and not completed the sales. As stated in the complaint, "Plaintiff's suit is about the criminal use of guns and a gun dealer that, by its wrongful acts and omissions, supplied the criminal market with an illegally purchased gun that was used for criminal means, resulting in the tragic loss of Officer Fox's life."

After defeating several of the defendant's attempts to have the case dismissed, Brady struck a major settlement with In Site in 2019. In Site agreed to institute significant business reforms in order to prevent future straw sales. These reforms include utilizing a new sales system with greater emphasis on monitoring and regulating transactions, revising the employee handbook, requiring annual employee training, and improving practices to screen for potential straw buyers and other prohibited purchasers. In Site put forth a powerful public statement in their store and on their website not only committing the business to measures designed to prevent tragedies like Officer Fox's death from happening again, but encouraging all gun dealers to go beyond the minimum statutory requirements and implement safe business practices to prevent firearms from being obtained by prohibited purchasers, straw purchasers, and other persons who pose a danger to themselves or others when in possession of a firearm.

The lawsuit and the resulting settlement agreement are an example of how Brady holds gun dealers accountable for business practices that allow or enable firearms to be diverted to the illegal market.

## CURRENT SOURCE DEALERS OF GUNS USED IN HOMICIDES

As noted in **Table 1**, most of the crime guns in the database are not associated with violent crime. Of the 91,689 traces to dealers in Pennsylvania, 19,673 were recovered in an investigation into a violent crime. Of these, 3,136 are associated with a homicide. While the number of homicides is low compared to the total number of traces, it is

important to remember that each homicide is a life lost and a family left behind.

To focus again on current dealers' contributions to the problem, in **Table 10** we show the dealers who account for three or more of the 185 homicide guns recovered in 2020. For each dealer, the table presents the number of traces related to homicide in 2020, the average TTC of those traced guns, and, if known, whether at least two of that dealer's guns were traced to the same possessor. This is relevant

because law enforcement will often seize and trace all guns in the possession of a suspect, not just the guns used in the crime or found at the crime scene. For example, three of the four homicide-related guns traced to Miller Sporting Goods less than a month after they were sold were found in the possession of one person. These guns may have been bought in a multiple-gun purchase.

Remember, to have multiple crime guns traced to a dealer in one year is rare. To have multiple homicide guns traced to a dealer in one year is a strong indicator that the dealer is not doing nearly enough to prevent the store from contributing to gun crime.

**TABLE 10: DEALERS WITH MORE THAN THREE HOMICIDE-RELATED GUN TRACES IN 2020**

DEALER	2020 HOMICIDE TRACES	AVG. TTC (YEARS)	AT LEAST 2 GUNS WITH SAME POSSESSOR?
ACE SPORTING GOODS	9	4.41	
FIRING LINE INC	7	3.66	
ANTHONY ARMS & ACCESSORIES	7	4.58	X
GUNS PRICED RIGHT	6	1.22	
TARGETMASTER	6	5.18	
PHILADELPHIA TRAINING ACADEMY INC	5	5.42	
FRANKS GUN SHOP & SHOOTING RANGE LLC	5	1.39	
DELAWARE VALLEY SPORTS CTR INC	5	3.94	X
CONNELLSVILLE RURAL KING SUPPLY INC	5	1.99	X
LOCKS PHILADELPHIA GUN EXCHANGE	4	4.50	
DELIAS GUN SHOP	4	1.18	
TANNERS SPORTS CENTER INC	4	3.09	
MILLERS SPORTING GOODS	4	0.05	X
CLASSIC PISTOL	3	5.00	
SUBURBAN ARMORY, THE	3	4.62	

# CASE STUDY:

## SALES PRACTICES OF INDIVIDUAL DEALERS HAVE IMPACT

On October 27, 2020, 31-year-old Kenny Mister was shot in the parking lot of the Days Inn in Chester, Pennsylvania. Another victim, 31-year-old Najee Walker, was found in his car nearby a short time later. Both victims were rushed to the hospital, but Kenny died from his injuries. After the suspected shooter, a 23-year-old man, was identified from security videos, he turned himself in to the police.

A .32 caliber Beretta handgun was recovered on the street near the motel, and ballistics analysis matched the gun to the bullets and casings from the shootings. The gun appears in the gun tracing database as likely having been sold by Guns Priced Right of Pittsburgh in July 2020, just 94 days prior to the weapon's recovery at the crime scene. The purchaser was a 22-year-old woman who bought the gun as part of a multiple-gun purchase. Note that because of the very short time-to-crime, the purchase of multiple guns, and the fact that the purchaser was not the shooter, there is a high likelihood of the gun having been sold to a straw buyer.

If this purchase was indeed a straw sale, Guns Priced Right should have been prepared to identify any red flags presented by the buyer. In 2016, due to a high volume of annual traces with short time-to-crime, an ATF inspector identified the store as a **“Top 100 Trace Inspection” and conducted an inspection “with a disposition emphasis to identify potential patterns of suspicious activity.”**

The inspection found more than one occasion when Guns Priced Right completed a sale despite the buyer indicating on the paperwork that they were

not buying the gun for themselves. The inspector also looked into the circumstances regarding firearms traced to Guns Priced Right and referred nine purchasers to law enforcement for further investigation into possible straw purchasing and/or gun trafficking. Overall, the inspector found nine violations of federal regulations and made 11 referrals to law enforcement.

With this history of large volumes of traced guns, referrals to law enforcement for illegal purchases, and ATF instruction on how to spot suspicious purchases, Guns Priced Right was on notice that would-be straw buyers were among their clientele. The store should have been prepared to prevent a sale like the one that resulted in Kenny Mister's death.

Indeed, the dealer was already aware that certain sales carry higher risk. Based on the findings of the ATF inspector, Guns Priced Right “made the immediate decision to cease selling Hi-Point Pistols, one of their most traced firearms.” And, in fact, of the 1,910 Hi-Point pistols in the database traced to Pennsylvania dealers, just five were traced to Guns Priced Right, and all were sold prior to the 2016 inspection. Thus, the impacts of the decisions and sales practices of Guns Priced Right can be seen in the data.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Other jurisdictions should follow Pennsylvania’s decision to be more transparent with trace data.**

We applaud Attorney General Shapiro for creating and publishing the Gun Tracing Analytics Platform. Transparent trace data can and must be used by the public, elected officials, and law enforcement to hold the gun industry accountable and save lives. More states and jurisdictions should consider publishing their own gun trace data.

**Researchers and journalists should build upon this analysis.** With open gun tracing information, the public has a better understanding of the supply side of the gun violence equation. Journalists should use this data and expand their coverage of gun crime to include not only information about perpetrators, but also the sources and circumstances of how they acquire their firearm(s). Researchers should use the data in the platform to study the sources and paths of crime guns, providing a broader base of evidence from which lawmakers, law enforcement, and communities can develop effective solutions to gun violence.

**Federal, state, and local law enforcement should use trace data to inform enforcement and oversight strategies against upstream sources of crime guns.** Law enforcement agencies must work collaboratively and across jurisdictions to ensure that licensed gun dealers are responsibly selling firearms to the public. Focusing on the largest dealers of crime guns with short TTCs is an efficient and effective approach to preventing future gun injuries and deaths. Law enforcement must use all the tools at its disposal to ensure compliance with the law and disincentivize irresponsible firearm sales.

**State and local elected officials in Pennsylvania should use these findings as motivation to consider ways in which they can better regulate problematic gun dealers.** Local governments must be careful not to run afoul of Pennsylvania’s preemption law, which prohibits local regulations from being more strict than state regulations, but many municipalities may already have ordinances or regulations on the books that offer ways to hold gun dealers accountable. At a minimum, the state government and all local governments should ensure their procurement rules incentivize better business practices for gun dealers; dealers who supply crime guns should not be eligible for taxpayer-funded purchases. Importantly, state lawmakers should adopt policies that promote the safe transfer of firearms and allow for better oversight of — and more effective enforcement against — gun industry businesses that supply the criminal market.

**State elected officials should consider implementing a permit-to-purchase requirement.** Requiring purchasers to present an obtained permit to a licensed dealer in advance of a firearm transfer helps deter individuals who are attempting to assist in firearm trafficking by purchasing a gun for another person in a straw sale.<sup>14</sup>

**Gun dealers should adopt Brady’s Gun Dealer Code of Conduct to avoid supplying the criminal market or making other risky sales.** The [Brady Gun Dealer Code of Conduct](#) contains best practices for the safe transfer of firearms to the public. Many responsible gun dealers already follow a number of the policies included in the Code of Conduct.

**Gun manufacturers should stop supplying guns to dealers that sell a large number of crime guns with short TTCs.** As we first noted in 2006 in our “[Without a Trace](#)” report, trace data provides “powerful evidence of the gun industry’s complicity in fueling the illegal market. It is now clear that a relatively small number of readily identifiable licensed gun dealers are the source of most guns used in crime. This raises the obvious question: Why are gun manufacturers and distributors continuing to use these high-risk dealers to sell their guns? The answer appears obvious. Every gun sold to a gun trafficker is as profitable as a gun sold to a law-abiding sportsman. The industry has a vested financial interest in the continued flow of guns from its licensed dealers into the criminal market.” It is past time for gun manufacturers to change this mentality and take real, concrete steps to ensure that their products do not end up in the illegal market.

# ENDNOTES

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# APPENDIX

Column Heading	Description of data
Crime category	Broad description of the crime associated with the firearm, such as Property, Violent, Fraud, etc.
Crime code	National Crime Information Center code for the crime associated with the firearm
Crime code description1	Further information about some crimes, such a Carrying Concealed
Crime description	More specific description of the crime associated with the firearm, such as Burglary, Homicide, Possession of Weapon, etc.
Crime type	Provides more information for some crimes, such as Illegal Weapon Possession or Weapon Trafficking
Dealer out of state	Returns "Y" if the FFL that sold the gun originally is located out-of-state and "N" if in-state
Dealer out of state %	Returns "100" if the FFL that sold the gun originally is out-of-state and "0" if in-state
Dealer>Dealer Country	Country in which the FFL that sold the firearm originally is located
Dealer>Dealer County	County in which the FFL that sold the gun originally is located
Dealer>Dealer Out Of Business	Returns "Y" if FFL that sold the gun originally is no longer business at the time of the trace and "N" if in business
Dealer>Dealer Seq	*unknown*
Dealer>Dealer Ship Date	Date the FFL originally received the firearm from the manufacturer or distributor
Dealer>Dealer State	State in which the FFL that sold the gun originally is located
DEALER>DEALER_PHONE	Phone number of the FFL that originally sold the firearm
Display map	*unknown*
F1	*unknown*
Firearm Timetocrime Years	Time-to-crime of the firearm in fractional years
Firearm Timetocrime Years (bin)	Time-to-crime for the firearm in whole years
Firearm TTC (capped)	Time-to-crime of the firearm in fractional years if less than 25 years
Firearm TTC (capped) (bin)	Time-to-crime for the firearm in whole years, less than 1 year, or more than 25 years
Firearm TTC (days)	Time-to-crime of the firearm in days
Firearm TTC filter bins	Time-to-crime for the firearm within a range of years
Firearm>Caliber	The caliber of ammunition the firearm will shoot
FIREARM>IDENTIFYING_MARKS	Notes about the firearm's appearance, if unique
FIREARM>IMPORTER_NAME	Name of the importer if the firearm is of foreign manufacture
Firearm>Manufacturer	Name of the manufacturer of the firearm as a two- or three-letter code
Firearm>Manufacturer Name	Full name of the manufacturer of the firearm
Firearm>Model	Model number or model name of the firearm
Firearm>Obliterated Indicator	Notation indicating whether the firearm's serial number has been obliterated or is not present

Column Heading	Description of data
Firearm>Origin	Country of origin of the firearm as a two-letter code
Firearm>Origin Country Name	Country of origin of the firearm
Firearm>Type	Same as Firearm>Type Desc, as a one- or two-letter code
Firearm>Type Desc	Describes type of firearm (pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, Derringer, other)
General crime group (table filter)	Same as Crime Category column
Handgun count	*unknown*
In-state vs out-of-state	Whether the FFL that sold the gun originally is located in Pennsylvania or out-of-state
Number of Records	*unknown*
Possessor>Indiv Dob	Date of birth of the individual who possessed the firearm at the time of recovery
Possessor>Indiv Pob City	City of birth of the individual who possessed the firearm at the time of recovery
Possessor>Indiv Pob Country	Country of birth of the individual who possessed the firearm at the time of recovery
Possessor>Indiv Pob County	County of birth of the individual who possessed the firearm at the time of recovery
Possessor>Indiv Pob State	State of birth of the individual who possessed the firearm at the time of recovery
Possessor>Indiv Role	Code for possessor = S
Possessor>Indiv Seq	*unknown*
Purchaser age at purchase	Age of purchaser at the time of purchase
Purchaser age bins	Age of purchaser within a range of years
Purchaser>Indiv City	City of residence of firearm's original purchaser at time of purchase
Purchaser>Indiv Country	Country of residence of firearm's original purchaser at time of purchase
Purchaser>Indiv County	County of residence of firearm's original purchaser at time of purchase
Purchaser>Indiv Dob	Date of birth of firearm's original purchaser
Purchaser>Indiv Involve Date	Date of purchaser's purchase of firearm
Purchaser>Indiv Pob Country	Country of birth of firearm's original purchaser
Purchaser>Indiv Pob County	County of birth of firearm's original purchaser
Purchaser>Indiv Pob State	State of birth of firearm's original purchaser
Purchaser>Indiv Race	Race of the firearm's original purchaser
Purchaser>Indiv Race (group)	Race of the firearm's original purchaser, including "unknown"
Purchaser>Indiv Role	Code for purchaser = P
Purchaser>Indiv Seq	*unknown*
Purchaser>Indiv Sex	Sex of the firearm's original purchaser
Purchaser>Indiv Sex (group)	Sex of the firearm's original purchaser, including "unknown"
Purchaser>Indiv State	State of residence of firearm's original purchaser at time of purchase
PURCHASER>INDIV_HEIGHT	Height of purchaser in inches
PURCHASER>INDIV_POB_CITY	City of birth of firearm's original purchaser
PURCHASER>INDIV_WEIGHT	Weight of purchaser in pounds

Column Heading	Description of data
PURCHASER>INDIV_ZIP	Zip code of residence of firearm's original purchaser at time of purchase
Recovery year	Year in which the firearm was recovered by law enforcement
Recovery year (group)	Year in which the firearm was recovered by law enforcement
Recovery>Rec City	City in which the firearm was recovered
Recovery>Rec Country	Country in which the firearm was recovered
Recovery>Rec County	County in which the firearm was recovered
Recovery>Rec Date	Date the firearm was recovered
Recovery>Rec State	State in which the firearm was recovered by law enforcement
Recovery>Rec Time To Crime	Time-to-crime of the firearm in days
RECOVERY>REC_ZIP	Zip code in which the firearm was recovered by law enforcement
Summary>Completion Code	Two-digit alphanumeric code for Completion Text column
Summary>Completion Text	Summarizes the results of the trace
Trace Heading>Comp Date	Date the trace was completed
Trace Heading>Crime Cd	National Crime Information Center code for the crime associated with the firearm
Trace Heading>Fts Id	Identifying number of the trace in the Firearms Tracing System
Trace Heading>Gang Name	*unknown*
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori City	The city of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori Country	The country of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori Inv Number	*unknown*
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori Name	The name of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori Number	The ORI number of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori State	The state of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori Street	The street address of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Police Dept>Ori Zip	The zip code of the law enforcement agency and unit that requested the trace (ORI is the Originating Agency Identifier number, as assigned by the US Department of Justice)
Trace Heading>Priority	*unknown*
Trace Heading>Request Date	Date the trace request was made
TRACE_HEADING>ENTERED_USER	*unknown*
# of firearms	*unknown*



***TAKE ACTION  
NOT SIDES***