



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EIGHT INDICTED FOR VIOLATING FEDERAL FIREARMS LAW

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that eight defendants, including several firearms dealers, were indicted by a federal grand jury today, in three separate and unrelated cases, for violating federal firearms laws.

* **William Earl Gates**, 59, of Mountain Grove, Mo., was charged in a single-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield. **Gates** is the owner of Gator's Pawn, 619 S. Marshall, Marshfield, Mo.

The indictment alleges that **Gates** engaged in the business of dealing in firearms without a license on Dec. 3, 2003, in Webster County, Mo.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Monroe. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Webster County, Mo., Sheriff's Department.

* **John Robert Francis**, also known as Bob Francis, 63, **Nancy Francis**, 66, and **Barton Westerman**, 43, all of Springfield, were charged in a single-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield. **Nancy Francis** is the wife of **Bob Francis** and the mother of **Westerman**. **Bob Francis** is the manager of Westley Richards Agency USA, 4319 W. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield, and participates in the management of Gunsmoke Gun and Pawn, 4305 W. Chestnut Expressway, Springfield.

The indictment alleges that **Bob Francis**, aided and abetted by **Nancy Francis** and **Westerman**, was in possession of a Bauska Arms rifle on Nov. 12, 2002. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for anyone convicted of a felony to be in possession of any firearms or ammunition. **Bob Francis** has a 1986 criminal felony conviction for conspiracy to deal in

firearms without a license.

Today's indictment replaces a federal criminal complaint against the defendants that was filed on Dec. 16, 2003.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Monroe. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Springfield, Mo., Police Department; the Greene County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation; and the Railroad Retirement Board.

* **Randall K. Sheridan**, 60, **Linda G. Sheridan**, 56, **Steven A. Schlichting**, 54, and **Cathleen Schlichting**, 48, all of Springfield, were charged in a three-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield. The **Schlichtings**, who are married, operate Gunsmoke Gun/Gold Exchange pawnshop, 1828 A. East Division, Springfield (formerly Gunsmoke Gun Gallery, previously owned by **Randall Sheridan**). The **Sheridans** are also married.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that **Randall Sheridan**, aided and abetted by **Linda Sheridan**, **Cathleen Schlichting**, and **Steven Schlichting**, engaged in the business of dealing in firearms without a license from Jan. 1 through Jan. 31, 2002, in Greene County.

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Cathleen Schlichting**, a licensed firearms dealer, and **Steven Schlichting**, a responsible party, aided and abetted each other to sell and deliver a firearm without noting the true name, age, and place of residence of the true individual purchaser of the firearm on Oct. 17, 2003, in Greene County.

Count Three of the federal indictment alleges that **Steven Schlichting** presented a false document to the Railroad Retirement Board. The indictment alleges that **Steven Schlichting** presented a Continuing Disability Report on Dec. 5, 2002, in which he claimed that he had not worked and had not been self-employed since April 1, 1995. According to the indictment, **Steven Schlichting** had been and was then working.

Today's indictment replaces a federal criminal complaint against the **Schlichtings** that was filed on Dec. 16, 2003.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Monroe. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Springfield, Mo., Police Department; the Greene County, Mo., Sheriff's Department; and the Railroad Retirement Board.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictments are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow