



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

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MEMORANDUM TO: Special Agent in Charge
Dallas Field Division

THRU: Resident Agent in Charge ^{IL}
Lubbock Field Office 2-3-2011

FROM: Gary M. Styers
Special Agent
Lubbock Field Office

SUBJECT: Contact with Congressional Investigators

On February 2, 2011, at approximately 1500 hours, ATF Special Agent Gary Styers was contacted telephonically by Robert Donovan and Brian Downey, representing United States Senator Chuck Grassley and the Senate Judiciary Committee. Downey and Donovan after identifying themselves asked Special Agent Styers if he would be willing to answer some questions regarding the time Special Agent Styers spent on a detail to the Phoenix Field Division, Phoenix Group VII Office. Special Agent Styers said he would be willing to answer questions to the best of his knowledge.

Special Agent Styers was asked if he was familiar with the large firearms trafficking case in Phoenix Group VII and Special Agent Styers said he was. Downey and Donovan asked if Special Agent Styers knew the name of the case and he responded that it was "Fast and Furious". Downey and Donovan then asked if Special Agent Styers knew who the case agent was and Special Agent Styers said it was Special Agent [ATF]. Special Agent Styers was also asked who the supervisor of the group was and Special Agent Styers said it was Group Supervisor [ATF]. Downey and Donovan also asked who helped Special Agent [ATF], Special Agent Styers said that Special Agent [ATF] had a Co-Case Agent from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as well as an agent from Group VII. Downey and Donovan asked who was the Agent from ICE and Special Agent Styers told them it was Lane France.

Downey and Donovan asked Special Agent Styers if he knew what the agents were assigned to do on the investigation. Special Agent Styers explained that a group of agents were assigned to the case and that since the case was in the stage of an active wiretap, some agents were working within the group and

others were working at various functions related to the wire. Special Agent Styers further said that he did not specifically know the role of each individual agent.

Downey and Donovan inquired as to the role that Special Agent Styers had in this case and Special Agent Styers advised that he had assisted with some surveillance operations with the case. Special Agent Styers was asked to describe the operations and relayed that one of the operations was a suspected transaction that was to occur at a gas station and detailed agents were asked to cover the transaction. While positioning to observe the suspects, Special Agent Styers and other detailed agents were told by Special Agent [ATF] that agents were too close and would burn the operation. Special Agent [ATF] told all the agents to leave the immediate area. While the agents were repositioning, the transaction between the suspects took place and the vehicle that took possession of the firearms eventually left the area without agents following it.

Downey and Donovan asked Special Agent Styers if he ever saw guns actually go into Mexico. Special Agent Styers said he did not see any firearms cross the border to Mexico. They also asked if Special Agent Styers had worked with any agencies in Mexico, Special Agent Styers relayed that he had not, but had knowledge that other agents within Group VII spoke of communication with other ATF Special Agents assigned in Mexico.

Downey and Donovan then asked if Special Agent Styers had any knowledge that Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) were reporting suspected straw purchasers. Special Agent Styers explained that FFLs were indeed reporting such situations and that Special Agent Styers had numerous contacts with FFLs in the Phoenix area and had also worked inside of an FFL in an undercover capacity, while an individual attempted a large scale straw purchase. Special Agent Styers told Downey and Donovan that in speaking with the FFL holder and owner of the gun shop, he told Special Agent Styers that he had asked ATF to install cameras inside his shop and to have an undercover agent inside on a more regular basis.

Downey and Donovan inquired as to what the procedures were and who handled the calls from the FFLs when they reported such suspected transactions. Special Agent Styers told them that he had no knowledge of any special procedures. If the FFLs called during normal business hours, Special Agent Styers assumed that, if they called the office number, their call was handled by the Group Supervisor. Special Agent Styers also told Downey and Donovan that if the FFLs were calling individual agents within the group, he had no direct knowledge of those calls and what the ATF response was to those reports. However, Special Agent Styers did tell Downey and Donovan that he had heard from within the group that FFLs were calling case agents.

With regards to statistics and reporting, Downey and Donovan, questioned Special Agent Styers as to whether he had any knowledge of "padding of statistics or inconsistent reporting". Special Agent Styers advised them that he had no knowledge of a wide scale effort to skew statistics. However, Special Agent Styers relayed that he did question the Group Supervisor as to why he wanted Special Agent Styers to trace firearms that had not been recovered. Special Agent Styers was assigned to the investigation and provided the ATF Form 4473s, the Firearms Transaction Record, and told to trace said firearms. Special Agent Styers asked as to why, when ATF has the Suspect Gun Database, which is designed for such firearms that have yet to be recovered by law enforcement. Group Supervisor [ATF] said he wanted them traced so that if someone else traced the firearms, they would know the firearms were connected to the case Special Agent Styers was assigned. Special Agent Styers relayed that even though he disagreed with the requested procedures, he follow the request of Group Supervisor [ATF]. Special Agent Styers also informed Donovan and Downey that he asked several agents also assigned to Group VII if they had to submit similar firearms traces and they replied that they in fact also were told to trace all firearms in a similar fashion.

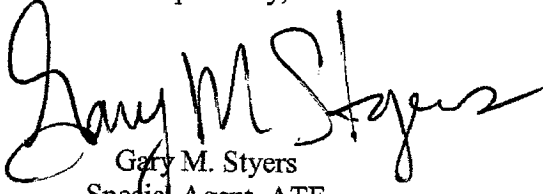
Special Agent Styers was then asked about his general impression of the Fast and Furious case. Special Agent Styers stated that the case had systematically divided and isolated agents from the group. The case agent had solicited the advice of numerous experienced agents, including Special Agent Styers, regarding how to conduct and end the wiretap operations and case overall. Special Agent Styers gave the case agent his honest opinion and advice since Special Agent Styers had worked two ATF investigations in his career. Special Agent Styers felt that his advice and opinions, as well as other agents' advice and opinions were widely disregarded. Along with other agents within the group, Special Agent Styers explained that he was no longer asked to assist with Fast and Furious and concentrated on his assigned cases and provided necessary assistance to fellow agents within the detail and group.

Downey and Donovan asked Special Agent Styers what he felt was incorrect about the way the Fast and Furious case was conducted. Special Agent Styers explained that first and foremost, it is unheard of to have an active ATF investigation without full time dedicated surveillance units on the ground. Special Agent Styers relayed that no agents in the group were assigned to surveillance on the Fast and Furious case. Special Agent Styers said that other agencies or task force officers may have been used to conduct surveillance and respond to calls of FFLs, but it seemed that either the case agent or Group Supervisor would poll the office for agents who were available to respond at short notice.

Secondly, Special Agent Styers said that it appeared odd to have a majority of ATF Agents working on a ATF investigation, who had never worked such a case. Especially, when numerous, permanent Group VII agents and detailers had previous wiretap experience.

Special Agent Styers was provided with contact information for Downey and Donovan and the conversation was ended. Special Agent Styers contacted the Lubbock Resident Agent in Charge, Jim Luera at 1545 hours after the conversation with Downey and Donovan ended, to inform him of the contact. Special Agent Styers was later asked to document the conversation herein and attempted to do so to the fullest extent possible.

Respectfully,


Gary M. Styers
Special Agent, ATF