
From: Grindler, Gary (OAG)
To: Attorney General
Sent: 2/13/2011 3:25:07 PM
Subject: Fw: Sen Grassley allegations about ATF

What do you think?

----- Original Message -----
From: Breuer, Lanny A. (CRM)
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2011 03:19 PM
To: Grindler, Gary (OAG)
Subject: Sen Grassley allegations about ATF

Gary,

To follow up on our conversation of Friday morning, prior to the Senate staff briefing on Thursday, Jason checked with the USAO in AZ and with ATF (both HQ and AZ) and was advised that the specific allegation in Sen. Grassley's most recent letter -- that ATF encouraged a reluctant FFL to continue to make sales to suspected traffickers - is false.

From talking to Jason, my understanding is that OLA made the judgment not to address any of the specific allegations in Sen. Grassley's letters during the briefing. Instead, Jason and the ATF reps. provided a tutorial of sorts on how cases against sophisticated gun trafficking organizations like the one in AZ are built. They walked the staffers through the kind of tactical and investigative judgments involved at each stage of the investigation, drawing an analogy between gun trafficking cases and drug conspiracy cases. The goal - and by all accounts it seems to have worked - was to communicate that the ATF's work in the AZ case and others like it reflected sound judgment and investigative work.

During the Q&A at the briefing, Sen. Grassley's staffers asked a number of specific questions about the AZ investigation, which our folks declined to answer, with one exception. A staffer asked whether as part of the AZ case, ATF ever encouraged a reluctant FFL to continue unlawful sales. Jason and the ATF reps. responded that based on their knowledge of the case, they were unaware of that ever having happened in this investigation.

Up to this point, our inquiries about the Grassley allegations have been at the U.S. Attorney/SAC level. If the AG would like us to look into those allegations further, I could have Jason talk specifically to the AUSAs and case agents and report back. Just let us know how you'd like us to proceed.

Best, Lanny