

## Brother and Sister Duo From St. Thomas Get 10 and 3-Year Sentences Respectively for Firearms Trafficking

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United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced Wednesday that Shawn Tyson, 34, and Natasha France, 30, brother and sister, both of St. Thomas, were sentenced Tuesday for their roles in a firearms trafficking scheme. Tyson, who was found guilty after a two-day trial of being a felon in possession of ammunition and of mailing firearms, was sentenced to 120 months imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release. France was sentenced to 41 months imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, for her convictions of willfully transferring weapons out of state to another unlicensed person, unlawfully mailing firearms, and delivering firearms to a common carrier without written notice.

According to trial testimony, in November 2018, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers intercepted five United States Postal Service (USPS) parcels France had mailed from

Atlanta, Georgia to Tyson at the St. Thomas Jet Center in St. Thomas. Collectively, the parcels contained gun parts sufficient to assemble eight ATI Omni Maxx pistols, along with three additional lower receivers and other gun components. In total, nine of the eleven gun lower receivers, all of which constitute firearms under federal law, were ATI Omni Maxx Hybrids. The serial numbers on all eleven of the lower receivers were obliterated, in violation of federal law. USPS surveillance video captured France mailing the parcels on November 10, 2018.

After CBP confiscated the first five parcels, the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) intercepted four additional parcels that were en route from Atlanta to defendant Tyson at the St. Thomas Jet Center. Two of the four parcels had been placed in the mail on November 13, 2018 and were addressed from Natasha France to Shawn Tyson. These two parcels contained the parts sufficient to assemble two Mini Draco, 7.62 pistols. The other two parcels were placed in the mail on November 14, 2018 and were addressed from Shawn Tyson to Shawn Tyson. These parcels contained the parts sufficient to assemble three ATI Omni Maxx hybrids, as well as two additional ATI lower receivers. The serial numbers on all seven of the lower receivers contained in the four parcels were obliterated. Evidence at trial proved that defendant Tyson paid for the parcels mailed to/from himself on November 14, 2018.

The trial evidence also established that between November 2, 2018 and November 9, 2018, defendant France and two associates collectively purchased nine ATI Omni Max Hybrid pistols from various gun stores in the greater Atlanta area. Thereafter, on November 11, 2018, France purchased two additional Mini Draco pistols—the same make, model, and quantity of firearms that she mailed to Tyson two days later. On the same date that she mailed the two Mini Dracos, France was captured on a pawn store’s surveillance video staging her arrival time with Tyson and several other associates. Two of the associates purchased a total of five ATI Omni Maxx Hybrids. A store employee recalled Tyson having provided one of the associates with the cash to pay for her purchase.

Evidence at trial also established that on December 13, 2018, while executing a search warrant, agents with Homeland Security Investigations and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives recovered .223 caliber, 9 mm caliber, and .40 caliber ammunition from defendant Tyson’s locked bedroom in St. Thomas, and a total of five auto sears from the residence. The sole purpose of an auto sear is to convert a semiautomatic firearm into a fully automatic firearm—in other words, a machinegun. At sentencing, the United States submitted proof that Tyson had illegally purchased and received over one hundred such auto sears.

This case was investigated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, Office of Export Enforcement, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Meredith J. Edwards.