

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Brother and Sister Duo Found Guilty of Elaborate Scheme to Transport Numerous Firearms From Atlanta to St. Thomas

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ATI Omni Hybrid Maxx P4B hand gun By. Twitter

ST. THOMAS — Shawn Tyson was found guilty Thursday of being a felon in possession of ammunition and of mailing firearms after a two-day jury trial in District Court, United States Attorney Gretchen C.F. Shappert announced. After jury selection earlier in the week, Natasha France, Tyson's sister, who was charged with Tyson, pleaded guilty to two counts of willfully transferring weapons out of state to another unlicensed person, three counts of unlawfully mailing firearms, and three counts of delivering firearms to a

common carrier without written notice.

According to trial testimony, on November 10, 2018, Natasha France was captured on a United States Postal Service (USPS) surveillance video, walking into an Atlanta, Georgia post office and mailing six parcels to her brother Shawn Tyson at the St. Thomas Jet Center. Five of the parcels were subsequently intercepted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers when the packages arrived in St. Thomas. Inside of the parcels, CBP officers found 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 were ATI Omni Maxx hybrids, which constitute firearms under federal law. The serial numbers on all eleven of the lower receivers were obliterated, in violation of federal law.

After confiscating the gun parcels mailed by defendant France from Atlanta on November 10, 2018, the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) discovered four additional parcels en route from Atlanta to defendant Tyson at the St. Thomas Jet Center. Those parcels were also intercepted by law enforcement. Two of the four parcels were mailed on November 13, 2018, and were addressed from Natasha France to Shawn Tyson, while the other two were addressed from Shawn Tyson to Shawn Tyson. The two parcels mailed on November 13, 2018 contained parts sufficient to assemble two Mini Draco, 7.62 pistols, while the two parcels mailed on November 14, 2018, 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, in violation of federal law.

Evidence at trial proved that defendant Tyson paid for the parcels mailed to and from himself on November 14, 2018.

Evidence presented at trial 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 on November 13, 2018. On that same date, France, Tyson, and two associates were captured on surveillance video staging their arrival times at Elite Pawn in Conyers, Georgia, where the two associates purchased a total of five ATI Omni Maxx hybrids.

The trial evidence also established that on December 13, 2018, while executing a search warrant, agents with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) recovered .223 caliber, 9 mm caliber, and .40 caliber ammunition from defendant Tyson's locked bedroom in St. Thomas.

France's sentencing hearing is scheduled for April 16, 2020; Tyson's is scheduled for April 23, 2020. France faces a five-year maximum term of imprisonment on each of the counts of unlawfully transferring firearms and failing to provide written notice to a common carrier, and a maximum term of two years' imprisonment on each of the counts of unlawfully mailing firearms. Tyson faces a ten-year maximum term of imprisonment on the felon in possession of ammunition charge and a two-year maximum on the unlawful mailing charge. France and Tyson are both facing federal firearms charges in Atlanta, along with others.

This case was investigated by CBP, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), USPIS, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Meredith J. Edwards and George Andrew LaTaif-Massucco.

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