



# Department of Justice

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Northern District of Georgia

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## **FAMILY MEMBERS CONVICTED OF GUN TRAFFICKING BY JURY**

ATLANTA, GA - A jury in federal district court late this afternoon returned guilty verdicts against HASSAN AWALI, 42, and BARBARA CLEVELAND, 52, both of Gordon, Georgia, on charges of lying to a firearms dealer for the purpose of illegally buying guns.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said, "Georgia is the source state for far too many illegal guns. In this case, these defendants illegally bought five handguns that within weeks ended up being used in crimes in New Jersey. As this case demonstrates, we are committed to prosecuting those individuals who traffic in illegal firearms."

"It is critically important to eliminate the source of crime guns before they are found in the hands of criminals," said Assistant Special Agent in Charge Scott Sweetow of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Atlanta Field Division. "As evidenced in this case, gun trafficking is not just a local issue where violent crime occurs. In ATF's experience, firearms trafficking is all too often a regional or international issue. Firearms traffickers understand the law of supply and demand and so does ATF. As long as there are those willing to deceive gun dealers to satisfy a demand for guns, there will be a supply of ATF agents committed to pursuing them."

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented in court: CLEVELAND bought 5 handguns on the same day in August 2008. While she claimed that the guns were for herself, the jury found that she actually bought them on behalf of her brother, AWALI, who was a convicted felon not allowed by law to possess firearms. Three of those guns, including a semi-automatic handgun with a laser sight, were recovered weeks later at crime scenes in New Jersey. To convince the dealer to sell the guns to her, CLEVELAND lied on paperwork that is required by federal law when purchasing a gun from a dealer. The jury found the defendants guilty on all counts. AWALI and CLEVELAND were indicted on the charges on July 14, 2009.

AWALI and CLEVELAND could each receive a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled for July 14, 2010, at 2

p.m. before United States District Judge Timothy Batten, Sr. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Assistant United States Attorney Kim S. Dammers is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.justice.gov/usao/gan](http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan).