

DA urges reforms after suspect with homemade gun - Hunterdon County Democrat (Flemington, NJ) - May 13, 2018 - page A19

May 13, 2018 | Hunterdon County Democrat (Flemington, NJ) | Kurt Bresswein | Page A19

REGION

Aaron Ibrahim was a felon prohibited by federal law from buying the handgun he leveled at police at a Walmart Supercenter, drawing a barrage of bullets that left the 26-year-old dead.

Ibrahim exploited a "serious 'loophole'" in federal firearms laws to legally purchase key components of the gun — assembled by hand — that he carried during the incident March 28 in Lower Macungie Township, Lehigh County District Attorney Jim Martin says in his report on the shooting.

"I intend to forward this report to area federal and state legislators in the hope that corrective legislation may be promulgated," Martin says.

At issue is Ibrahim's legal purchase over the internet of the serial-numbered slide/barrel, also known as an upper, for a Glock .40-caliber handgun, according to Martin.

"Ironically, this integral part of the pistol may be purchased legally on the internet (eBay) without scrutiny — no ATF form required," Martin wrote. "It is not considered to be a firearm." It must be mated to a frame/receiver, or lower, to function.

Ibrahim "could not have legally purchased the frame/receiver," according to the DA. "But he could (and did) legally purchase the slide/barrel on the internet.

"It is believed that he then 'manufactured' a firearm by obtaining the lower portion (frame/receiver) of the weapon by purchasing a so-called 'Polymer 80' on the internet."

A Polymer 80 refers to a polymer-of-plastic frame that is 80 percent of a complete handgun, Martin said. According to polymer80.com, this 80 percent lower receiver may be transferred without a U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives federal firearms license.

The Polymer 80 is a do-it-yourself project without the holes needed to complete a firearm. A frame/receiver that has the necessary holes pre-drilled requires an ATF firearms transaction record designed to prevent purchase by a convict like Ibrahim.

"The manufacturing process can be easily completed by drilling or machining out the holes to attach the slide/barrel, trigger parts and other necessary parts," Martin wrote. "All of those can be acquired on the internet."

Likewise the instructions are available on YouTube or the how-to section of polymer80.com, which

does note “a strict policy against selling 80 percent receivers to convicted (sic) felons.”

Somehow, Ibrahim got one, despite crimes in his past “punishable by imprisonment exceeding one year,” according to Martin; that made Ibrahim a person not to possess firearms under federal law.

“The point I am making ... is that you can legally purchase everything but a frame without submitting an ATF form, but in place of a frame that you would have to submit an ATF form for you can buy one of these Polymer 80s on the internet,” Martin told lehighvalleylive.com.

It’s a common practice, Martin said, citing firearms experts.

“And in my opinion it represents a serious ‘loophole’ that should be closed by legislation at both the federal and state levels,” he wrote in his report. “Why permit the purchase of firearm parts without any scrutiny whatsoever by Persons Not to Possess, which they may then easily assemble into a functional firearm?””

Copyright 2018 Hunterdon County Democrat. All Rights Reserved.