



ROBERT T. JOHNSON
 DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE



Long-Term Sting Ends in Long Sentence for Former Stuy HS Teacher Who Believed it was an Arms-for-Terror Deal

(Bronx, NY – November 5, 2015) – Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson announces the sentencing of a Newark, New Jersey man to 15 years behind bars for his part in a massive cigarette smuggling and firearms sales ring, the proceeds of which he expected was to fund terrorist organizations.

54-year-old THEOPHILIS “Mike” BURROUGHS was sentenced today by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Ralph Fabrizio to 15 years in prison with another five years post-release supervision following a plea of guilty to:

Criminal Sale of a Firearm in the 1st Degree (Class B violent felony)
Money Laundering in the 1st Degree (Class B felony)
Criminal Tax Fraud in the 1st Degree (Class B felony)
Conspiracy in the 4th Degree (Class E felony)

In 2013, BURROUGHS pled guilty to the firearms sale, money laundering, tax evasion and conspiracy charges, and was promised a sentence of ten years. However, prior to sentencing, he withdrew that guilty plea. His case was then sent to Justice Fabrizio’s part for trial; he took a plea last month that resulted in his current, longer, sentence.

The former music teacher at Stuyvesant High School was caught as a result of a joint investigation between the Bronx District Attorney’s office and the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance that began in 2009. During the course of the investigation, Burroughs arranged the sale of 13 firearms, including AK-47 and Norinco SKS assault rifles, a Sig Sauer 9mm, a Makarov, a Walther P99, a Hi Point .45 and other pistols and ammunition. The transactions took place in the Bronx, but



ROBERT T. JOHNSON
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE

undercover detectives took possession of the most of the firearms at a storage facility in Spartanburg, SC.

Burroughs also bought more than 27,000 cartons of purportedly untaxed cigarettes, sold Oxycodone to undercover investigators, and offered to sell many types of explosive devices, night vision goggles, gunpowder, and drugs. During many hours of video and audiotaped meetings, BURROUGHS believed that the individuals with whom he was dealing were connected to Hamas. He is also heard expressing his support for Hamas and other terrorist organizations.

The nerve center of the sting operation was a Bronx warehouse in the Westchester Square section of the borough, which had been leased by the NYS Tax department and was equipped with audio and video surveillance. The sting also netted 16 other defendants who have already pled guilty to various tax and gun charges.

THEOPHILIS BURROUGHS still faces gun, cigarette and drug charges in New Jersey.

"It is particularly disturbing when someone who is tasked with educating our young commits crimes. It is more disturbing that he did so complicit in the belief he was promoting terrorism," noted Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson.

"This case proves there's a heavy price to pay for tax fraud and illegal cigarette smuggling, as well as other serious crimes," said New York State Commissioner of Taxation and Finance Jerry Boone. *"It also shows that teamwork brings results, which is why we will continue to work closely with district attorneys and local law enforcement across the state to prosecute tax evasion cases."*

The case against THEOPHILIS BURROUGHS was prosecuted by Assistant D.A.s Tama Monoson and Beth Kublin of the Arson/Auto/Economic Crime Bureau.

D.A. Johnson also wished to thank the NYPD's D.A. Squad as well as its former Detective Mark Rawdon; the NYS Tax Department's Criminal Investigations Division; NYS Department of Finance Investigator Julio Monell; Bronx Assistant D.A. Jessica Lupo and former Bronx A.D.A. Graham Van Epps; ATF Supervising Agent David Sanford and his agents stationed in South Carolina; and the Essex County, NJ Sheriff's Office.

###

Note: Additional photos downloadable at: <http://bit.ly/1iD6EJx>