

12/30/24 Chicago murders are down 7% citywide from 2023. But when comparing police districts, the numbers are admittedly “uneven.” While the normally violence-beset Harrison District has suffered substantially fewer killings, the afflicted Ogden District is enduring a sharp increase, from 34 murders thru mid-December 2023 to 48 this year. And two beats within the violence-racked Grand Crossing area are even worse off, going from 12 murders in 2023 to 25 this year. Some are assigning blame to the increased lethality brought on by full-auto switches, extended magazines and assault rifles.

12/10/24 Luigi Mangione, a 26-year old U of Penn. computer science graduate, was caught with a 9mm. “ghost gun” that he is thought to have used in the notorious recent ambush slaying of health care executive Brian Thompson. This unserialized pistol, which he likely made on a 3-D printer, was equipped with a “suppressor” that muffles the sound of its firing. Mangione had fake ID’s and a handwritten three-page document professing “ill will toward corporate America.”

12/2/24 Two 17-year old teens and a middle-aged relative are under arrest after Federal agents alerted the Ventura County, Calif. Sheriff’s Dept. that one of the youths was receiving mail-order parts from foreign sources to make unserialized “ghost guns” and convert firearms into machineguns. Detectives intercepted several shipments, then served a search warrant at the youth’s home. That turned up nineteen illegal guns, including unserialized pistols and an AR-15 style machinegun, and a substantial quantity of ammunition.

11/27/24 According to a review by *The Trace*, Federal regulation and State laws helped abate a surge of home-built “ghost guns.” For example, in 2016 only 174 “ghosts” were recovered from crimes in California. By 2021, that number was an astounding 10,877. But their numbers then began to drop, and in 2023 “only” 8,340 were recovered. Credit is attributed in part to a 2022 ATF regulation that broadened the definition of a “firearm” to include parts kits, and to similar moves in State laws. ATF’s rule is under legal challenge, but it remains in effect pending a forthcoming decision by the Supreme Court. [ATF rule](#) (See 10/9/24 update)

11/12/24 Dispatched on a domestic assault, Maryland deputies found an arsenal of 80 handguns and rifles “in plain view” inside the residence to which they had been called. Returning with a search warrant, they uncovered a stash that included body armor, “multiple 3D-printed ghost guns,” 74 devices that convert guns into machineguns, and 1,300 rounds of ammunition. The suspect fled before the deputies’ initial visit and remains on the lam.

11/11/24 Gunfire broke out during a late-evening “unauthorized” homecoming party in an apartment on the campus of Alabama’s Tuskegee University. An 18-year old non-student was shot dead and twelve other persons were wounded. No one has yet been arrested for the shooting. Montgomery resident Jaquez Myrick, 25, was arrested on Federal charges of having a handgun that was illegally modified to enable full auto fire, i.e., a machinegun.

11/8/24 Darion C. McMillian, 23, was recently released from parole after being imprisoned for a 2019 shooting. And on November 4 he was on electronic monitoring for a pending drug case when Chicago police officers approached the double-parked car that he occupied. McMillian opened fire with a pistol converted by a “switch” to full-auto, killing Officer Enrique Martinez and, apparently by accident, the driver of his own vehicle. McMillian fled but was soon arrested. Officer Martinez, himself a young person, had less than three years on the job.

10/9/24 A 2022 Federal rule expanded the definition of just what is a firearm, thus subject to legal controls, to include parts kits that can be readily fashioned into a working gun. That upset the Fifth Circuit, which struck down the rule. But the Supreme Court voted 5-4 to keep it in place until it decided things. Yesterday it heard arguments, pro and con. Chief Justice Roberts seemed to favor the rule. “My understanding is that it’s not terribly difficult for someone to do this,” he said, about turning parts kits into unserialized “ghost guns.” But his colleagues seemed split. And a decision *will* come. (See 11/27/24 update)

9/23/24 Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin blames a “Glock switch,” an auto-sear that essentially turns the pistol into a machinegun, for enabling the shooters who opened fire in an entertainment district last Saturday night. At least four were shot dead and seventeen others were wounded in what police describe as a targeted shooting, with bystanders caught in crossfire. [Birmingham’s murder count is up substantially this year](#), inflated by mass shootings that killed four persons in February and four in July.

5/6/24 In its struggle against unserialized “ghost guns”, California enacted [Penal Code sec. 29185](#), which prohibits anyone other than a licensed gun manufacturer from having or acquiring a CNC milling machine whose primary purpose is to make firearms. One such machine, the “Ghost Gunner,” was being sold online by Defense Distributed. San Diego County is now suing the firm for returning the same machine to the market. Renamed the “Coast Runner”, it’s on sale to all comers, licensed or not.

4/23/24 Last October the Supreme Court temporarily set aside a ruling by a Fifth Circuit panel which invalidated a 2022 Federal rule that defined gun parts kits as

firearms, thus requiring they bear serial numbers and be subject to the same controls as functioning guns. ATF had intended that the rule stop the proliferation of so-called “ghost guns”, which are readily acquired by criminals and cannot be traced when recovered. The Supreme Court has now agreed to take up arguments and make the final decision. (See 10/17/23 update)

4/16/24 Following in the footsteps of D.C., Baltimore and Los Angeles, Philadelphia has secured an agreement from Polymer 80 to stop selling unserialized gun parts kits to its residents. Philadelphia’s move is intended to force would-be gun owners to undergo a background check, which can be avoided by assembling a gun from parts. As part of a court-approved settlement, the “ghost gun” maker is paying the violence-beset city \$1.3 million to recompense it for its troubles.

3/20/24 Chicago is suing gun maker Glock in Cook County court over a chronic design flaw that allows home-made “auto sears” to be easily fitted to its pistols. Auto sears, which enable firing multiple rounds with a single trigger squeeze, essentially turn guns into machineguns. Chicago PD reports seizing more than a thousand auto-sear equipped Glocks in the last two years.

3/12/24 Originally signed into effect by President Ronald Reagan, the “Undetectable Firearms Act” was just renewed. Until at least 2031, guns will be required to have enough metal to set off ordinary X-ray machines and metal detectors. Sneaking 3-D printed plastic guns through checkpoints will continue to require that they be disassembled and that metallic components such as firing pins be removed.

3/11/24 According to the Feds, last November’s hail of gunfire that left an 11-year old Cincinnati boy dead and wounded four other children and a woman was produced by a gun that was illegally converted to fire fully automatically. Tiny devices that turn pistols and rifles into machineguns can be made on a 3-D printer or ordered online from shady sources. Thousands have been recovered during the past few years. And while these “switches” are illegal under Federal law, most states still don’t forbid them.

2/26/24 In 2022 California enacted [AB 1594](#), a law that enables private persons to sue the gun industry over practices that unreasonably endanger the public. But a Federal judge just blocked enforcement of a provision that allows lawsuits for making and peddling “abnormally dangerous” guns. Other provisions, including those that forbid unfair business practices and require “reasonable controls” for gun safety, remain in effect while litigation over the law continues. (See 1/5/22 update)

2/20/24 “Auto sears” are small, illegal devices that convert guns into “machineguns”

that fire fully automatically, expelling numerous rounds with a single trigger squeeze. While Federally banned, they can be bought from online sources or made at home with a 3-D printer. Those peddled for use in Glock 9mm. pistols (called “Glock switches”) have become especially popular and are being increasingly used in violent crimes; most recently, in the January 2024 murder of Mississippi Deputy Sheriff Jeremy Malone.

1/8/24 When detained by Los Angeles police in November 2022, Isaac Loftus, 27, was attired in combat gear. He also carried a “ghost” pistol that he was reportedly pointing at passing cars. At his residence police and Federal agents found an “arsenal” of illegal guns, silencers and drop-in “auto sears” that illegally convert firearms to full auto. Loftus, a proud “boogaloo” whose mental history (he’s supposedly schizophrenic) precluded him from lawfully possessing guns, just drew two years in Federal prison.

12/14/23 Two Indiana brothers in their twenties drew stiff Federal prison terms after pleading guilty to providing undercover agents with five fully automatic “ghost gun” machineguns they had assembled from parts. Moyad and Mahde Dennon were fans of ISIS and agreed to build and provide dozens of such guns for delivery to ISIS and its partners in the Middle East. Moyad drew sixteen years; Mahde got twenty.

12/11/23 What’s a “gun”? It’s the “frame” or “receiver”, the serial number-bearing structure that’s the base for a gun’s internal components. That definition underlies the success of firms such as [Gunbusters](#). They buy surplus firearms from police and government agencies, shred the frames, then sell the internal parts as no-license-required “kits”. Paired with readily-available “unfinished” frames in kit form, the end result are unserialized, untraceable “ghost guns” that appeal to criminals and juveniles.

11/23/23 Racial animosity and, particularly, “suicidal ideation” are blamed for motivating 20-year old Benjamin Charles Jones to storm a Dayton-area Walmart and open fire on November 20, wounding four persons, one critically. Jones then shot himself dead. Jones used a .45 cal. carbine-style rifle he purchased at retail a few days earlier. That drew concern, as Fairborn police twice took him to a hospital last year because he was expressing suicidal thoughts. Whether that should have barred his gun purchase (or *could* have) is at question.

10/31/23 A 20-year old man attired in body armor and a helmet snuck into the Glenwood Caverns adventure park in Colorado during its off-hours. Diego Barajas Medina was equipped with a small arsenal of firearms, including “ghost guns”. He also had explosives, some real and some fake. Medina may have intended to carry out a massacre. But authorities found him in a bathroom, shot dead in an apparent suicide. “I am not a killer, I just wanted to get into the caves” he wrote on a wall.

10/17/23 Vacating a decision by a Texas Federal judge that was seconded by a three-judge Fifth Circuit panel, the Supreme Court temporarily reinstated a Federal rule that requires gun parts kits to bear serial numbers and be subject to the same Federal controls as working firearms. Blackhawk Manufacturing and Defense Distributed, two makers of “ghost gun” kits, will have to abide by the restrictions through the formal appeal process, which could eventually reach the Court. (See 4/23/24 update)

10/9/23 In 2019 16-year old Nathaniel Berhow roamed his Santa Clarita, Calif. high-school campus armed with a .45 caliber “ghost” pistol assembled from parts. Berhow opened fire on classmates, killing two, ages 14 and 15, and wounding three. Parents of the murdered teens have now filed a \$50 million suit against the school district. Among their allegations are poor physical security and a failure to intercede with Berhow, a troubled teen who, with his sister, was under supervision by juvenile authorities.

9/29/23 Trial took two months, but in the end jurors convicted Deonte Lee Murray of ten felonies, including attempted murder and felon with a gun, in the 2020 ambush shooting of L.A. County sheriff’s deputies Claudia Apolinar and Emmanuel Perez-Perez as they sat in their patrol car at a transit station. Murray was also convicted of another shooting, ten days earlier, in which he mistakenly thought that his victim was a detective. Murray used an unserialized “ghost pistol.” He faces life without parole. (See 8/11/21 update)

8/21/23 As long as finger pressure is maintained, “forced-reset” triggers (FRT’s) have a spring that resets the trigger after every round, allowing shooters to mimic a machine gun. In March 2022 [ATF declared these devices illegal](#) and barred Florida’s Rare Breed Triggers from making and selling them. But they persisted, and a Federal fraud case against Rare Breed is being heard in New York. Meanwhile a pro-gun organization filed a Federal lawsuit to the opposite effect in Texas’ gun-friendly Fifth Circuit.

8/9/23 Acting on a petition filed by the U.S., the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 to place a hold on a Texas Federal judge’s ruling that invalidated ATF’s rule defining unassembled “ghost gun” kits as firearms requiring serial numbers and subject to the full sales and recordkeeping provision of law. However, the Supreme Court did not rule on the merits of the rule, so the Government must pursue its appeal of the Texas judge’s decision through the Fifth Circuit, and if its is unsuccessful to the Supreme Court (see 10/17/23 update).

7/13/23 With nearly one-hundred manufacturers capitalizing on the demand, ghost guns - unserialized firearms assembled from parts - enable youths to be armed. And the

consequences are lethal. Unable to buy a handgun because of his age, an 18-year old drug dealer with “mental health issues” used one he built from a kit to gun down two 17-year olds. Their parents are suing Polymer80, the maker of the gun parts, and the retailer who peddled them online. According to ATF, Polymer 80 is responsible for nearly 90 percent of ghost guns recovered between 2017 and 2021, the year when this shooting occurred.

7/10/23 Another weekend of gun violence beset the nation. [NYPD officers arrested](#) an “extremely emotionally disturbed” 25-year old man who roamed Brooklyn and Queens on a scooter and randomly fired on pedestrians, killing one and wounding three. Police recovered an unserialized 9mm “ghost gun” pistol with an extended magazine. The suspect was later identified as Thomas Abreu. [In Chicago](#), a series of shootings left at least four dead and fourteen wounded. [And in Cleveland](#), an early-morning mass shooting in a nightclub district wounded nine.

6/14/23 House “Reds” passed a bill to repeal a new ATF rule, effective June 1, that imposes stiff registration requirements on rifles that are transformed into compact assault-style weapons by substituting a “stabilizing brace” for the shoulder stock. Stabilizing braces have figured in mass shootings, most recently in Nashville. President Biden promised to veto the bill should it reach his desk. Some courts, though, have put the rule on hold while litigation by gun makers and enthusiasts proceeds. (See 5/24/23 update)

6/5/23 Nevada-based Polymer80 is paying Los Angeles \$5 million to settle a lawsuit that it sold unserialized parts kits from which guns could be assembled (i.e., “ghost guns”) without running criminal records checks. “More than seven-hundred” such guns were recovered by LAPD that year. Filed in 2020, the lawsuit actually predates an [August, 2022 Federal rule](#) that defines such kits such as “firearms”. And ATF and San Diego police [just announced the arrest](#) of 29 persons for illegally assembling, making and possessing eighty-two “ghost guns”.

5/24/23 “Stabilizing braces” that can transform handguns into shoulder-fired weapons were to be banned under a proposed Federal regulation. But the New-Orleans based Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has put the ban on hold while it litigates a lawsuit against the rule that was brought by gun-rights advocates and a maker of the braces. [In February the Fifth Circuit invalidated a Federal prohibition](#) on gun possession by persons subject to domestic violence restraining orders. (See 6/14/23 update)

5/18/23 ATF Director Steven Dettelbach warns about a proliferation of “auto sears”, small devices that convert weapons to fully automatic fire, so that a single trigger

squeeze discharges multiple projectiles. While illegal, their use has proliferated, placing officers and the public at risk. In Mississippi a Federal judge just imposed a 14-year term on a defendant who was making them on a 3-D printer.

3/16/23 A Federal-local task force arrested three men for creating a ghost-gun “pipeline” that moved large numbers of untraceable weapons, including assault-style rifles, from Massachusetts to New York City. A 123-count indictment charges that the defendants sold unserialized guns, parts sets and cocaine to undercover agents, and that one of the accused, a former Smith & Wesson employee, provided instruction for the weapons’ assembly and operation.

3/15/23 President Biden’s March 14 “Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence and Making Our Communities Safer” directs the Attorney General to take steps to assure that gun dealers comply with Federal firearms laws, that background checks are properly performed on all gun sales, and that “rogue” licensees are weeded out and kept from returning to the gun business. His order also addresses “modernizing” the definition of “ghost guns” and expanding State and local use of “Red Flag” laws.

3/10/23 NYPD seized 463 “ghost guns” in 2022, an increase of nearly eighty percent over 2021. That just led the state’s attorney general to secure a court order forbidding ten gun distributors from sending “key” ghost-gun components to customers in the state. New York City’s most recent ghost-gun seizure took place yesterday, when police confiscated ghost-gun parts and other contraband from an upscale apartment occupied by Christopher Fox, the brother of a famous actress and model.

3/2/23 ATF reports it’s recovered *more than forty-five thousand* unserialized, homemade “ghost guns” during the past five years, including 629 used in murders. A recent raid on L.A.-area gang members led to the seizure of a large quantity of drugs along with 82 firearms. Many were high-capacity assault weapons. Forty-two were “ghost guns.”

2/6/23 A .223 caliber assault rifle with no serial number - a “ghost gun - was the weapon used by ex-con Nathaniel Dixon to murder Selma, Calif. police officer Gonzalo Carrasco Jr. on January 31. Dixon, who was released from prison early despite having multiple convictions, was arrested. He faces murder and ex-con with a gun charges and is being held without bail.

12/30/22 Alleged serial killer Wesley Brownlee, whom authorities recently charged with murdering three Stockton (Calif.) residents last year, is now accused of committing four additional killings in 2021. Two of his victims also lived in Stockton, while the

others resided in surrounding Alameda County. Brownlee also faces an attempted murder charge in the wounding of a middle-aged Stockton woman. As a twice-convicted drug felon, Brownlee was barred from buying guns, so he used a “ghost gun” instead.

12/28/22 Interpreting a rule issued in August, [ATF announced](#) that many “partially complete” pistol frames “with any kind of indexing or material removed from the front or rear fire control cavities” are indeed “firearms” that require serial numbers and are subject to all legal controls. These frames, which are widely sold as unserialized parts, are modeled after Glocks and, once the remaining components are inserted, become unserialized, untraceable “ghost guns.”

12/16/22 Adopted through Executive action, a new rule aimed at “ghost guns” requires that serial numbers be affixed to gun parts kits. That’s apparently had little effect on the marketplace, and sellers continue to supply firearms components without restriction. Even as gun-control advocates howl, ATF is reluctant to step in to plug the circumvention. But it’s preparing an explanatory circular for release.

11/30/22 Gun-rights groups are suing to overturn California restrictions on, among other things, assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, home-made “ghost guns,” and age restrictions. These actions, which have been filed in San Diego’s assertedly gun-friendly Federal court, are based on the Supreme Court’s recent decision in [New York State v. Bruen](#), which held that gun laws must be “consistent with the Nation’s historical tradition of firearm regulation.” In the Justices’ predominant view, New York’s requirement that gun-carry applicants show “good cause” wasn’t, so it didn’t survive.

11/9/22 “Ghost guns” have become a problem in Great Britain, where police recently raided a “makeshift 3D firearms factory” at a private residence in London. As much as ninety percent of a weapon can be made off a printer, leaving barrels as the sole component that, being metallic, requires a traditional approach. But authorities are concerned that home 3D printing of metallic components “could become affordable in the next decade”.

9/30/22 A Delaware Federal judge has enjoined the State from enforcing most of a new State law that bars possessing, making and transferring “ghost guns.” Her action, which came in a lawsuit filed by gun-rights advocates, called the statute’s provisions barring the possession and manufacture of unserialized weapons an infringement of the Second Amendment.

9/29/22 Following the example set by Texas, which recently authorized private lawsuits against abortion providers, [California Governor Gavin Newsom signed a law in](#)

July that allows private individuals to sue anyone involved in producing or selling prohibited firearms. That includes unserialized “ghost guns” and firearms considered to be illegal assault weapons under State law. Pro-gun groups have in turn filed a lawsuit challenging the law. [Senate Bill 1327](#)

8/25/22 Now officially in effect, a new Federal regulation expands the requirement of affixing unique, traceable serial numbers to any part or parts kit that can be readily converted into a firearm, or into a “frame” or “receiver” for a firearm. Previously only completed “frames” or “receivers” had to be serialized. That led to the ready acquisition of guns by felons and underage persons and a proliferation of unserialized “ghost” guns that could not be traced to their source.

7/13/22 Passed under an urgency clause, thus taking effect immediately, a new California law requires that persons making or possessing unserialized guns (i.e., “ghost guns”) apply to the State Department of Justice for a serial number and permanently affix it to the weapon.

7/10/22 In Illinois, loopholes are being blamed for the acquisition of guns by dangerous persons. Robert Crimo III, the Highland Park shooter, had threatened family members. But he had not yet acquired guns and State officers disagreed he warranted being disqualified. So when he later applied for a gun permit there was no entry in the system to stop him. Three years earlier another mass shooter, Gary Martin, was cleared to buy guns despite a felony conviction because his name check went astray. Two months later, when the problem was discovered, his local police department failed to follow up and seize his gun.

7/9/22 Japan’s extremely restrictive gun laws are credited for an essentially zero gun homicide rate (one death and four injuries by gunfire were reported last year.) So the man who shot and killed former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on July 8 was perhaps of necessity armed with a homemade weapon. It’s been described as a double-barreled “musket.” Click [here](#) for another view.

6/1/22 Baltimore has announced plans to sue Polymer80, whose ghost gun kits it blames for an upsurge in gun violence. Lawsuits against the manufacturer of unserialized gun parts from which guns can be assembled are also pending in [Washington, D.C.](#) and [Los Angeles](#).

5/18/22 A new ATF report depicts a surge in firearms production during the past decade. Semi-automatic pistols have become the most popular weapon type. In 2020 over five and one-half million were manufactured and distributed in the U.S., with over half in 9mm. caliber. Between 2016-2021 the number of unserialized, privately

assembled “ghost guns” reportedly recovered by police increased by 1,000 percent, from 1,758 to 19,344, with 692 used in murders. [ATF Report \(Vol. I\)](#)

5/6/22 Addressing a gathering of police chiefs at ATF Headquarters, Attorney General Merrick B. Garland announced his commitment to remedying the problem of untraceable firearms. Regulations are being prepared that would treat gun parts kits as guns and require that even incomplete housings be serialized. Sellers of parts kits must have a gun dealer’s license and keep records. And should an unserialized “ghost gun” appear in a dealer’s inventory, applying a serial number would be mandatory.

4/12/22 DOJ submitted [a new Federal rule](#) that requires parts kits from which guns can be assembled to be treated like a gun: carry a serial number and be subject to a background check when sold at retail. Definitions of “frame or receiver,” the gun component that must be serialized, are broadened. Serial numbers must also be affixed to unserialized 3-D printed guns and guns assembled from parts that are presently in stock. During a 5-year period ending in December 2021 authorities recovered more than 45,000 such weapons (“ghost guns”); nearly 700 had been used in homicides and attempts.

3/10/22 After being told by a school employee and a student that a 22-year old student had talked about packing a gun and was “acting erratically,” a Los Angeles school police officer took him out of class. She looked in his backpack. It contained a loaded, unserialized 9-mm “ghost” pistol that had been assembled from parts.

3/7/22 A proposed Federal rule that would prohibit selling parts from which untraceable “ghost guns” can be assembled is still on the drawing board. And that has gun critics hopping mad. Pointing to ATF’s recent participation in the 2022 SHOT Show, they complain that its cozy relationship with the gun industry has stalled progress in the fight against firearms violence. ATF, though, insists that sharing information about regulatory issues is an important aspect of its work. Meanwhile the agency still lacks a permanent Director, as [Senate Republicans have long blocked nominees](#).

2/14/22 A discovery of three silencers in an outwardly legitimate shipment from China led Customs agents to search a Philadelphia-area home. Inside they found thirteen self-assembled machine guns and a dozen silencers. “Alt-Right Armory” podcaster Joseph Paul Berger, 32 and his father Joseph Raymond Berger, 67, were both arrested. [Joseph Paul, also known as “GlockDoctor1488,”](#) instructs fans on how to stealthily assemble forbidden, lethal fruit such as “ghost guns” at home. As he once said online, “a white man with a rifle can be very dangerous to the system indeed if he has the right motivation.”

1/5/22 Urged on by the Governor, California legislators have proposed a new bill, [AB 1594](#), to enable individuals to file “public nuisance” lawsuits against gun makers,

distributors or retailers who engage in “unfair business practices” or whose “failure to follow federal, state, or local law” causes death or injury. It’s modeled after a [recently-enacted](#) New York state statute, [S 7196](#), which addresses the “illegal” or “unreasonable” manufacture, marketing or sale of firearms. Both seem to clash in part with a 2005 Federal measure, the “[Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act](#),” which prohibits Federal and State civil suits against members of the gun industry for damages caused by “the misuse of their products.” (See 2/26/24 update)

12/2/21 In September the cities of [San Diego](#) and [San Francisco](#) banned buying, selling or possessing unserialized, unfinished firearm frames or receivers or assembling them into a gun (“ghost gun.”) Los Angeles is about to enact a similar ordinance. [Its lawsuit against ghost-gun parts kit maker Polymer80](#) also remains in progress. LAPD reports that forty percent of guns its officers currently seize are unserialized “ghosts.”

11/15/21 In a major study of “ghost guns,” *The New York Times* asserts that gun kits purchased online enable youths and criminals to easily acquire guns, thus fueling “an epidemic of violence,” and that its effects are most pronounced in California, which supposedly has some of the stiffest gun controls in the nation. Proposed Federal rules that would expand the definition of firearms to include “ghost” part kits seems stalled, and even if it passes their overwhelming abundance bespeaks a grim future.

10/29/21 On October 28 the Justice Department agreed to settle a multi-million dollar lawsuit brought by the families of the nine victims of [Dylan Roof](#), who perpetrated the 2015 South Carolina church massacre. Roof was able to acquire his gun at retail because [an FBI background checker did not follow through](#) to determine the disposition of his recent drug arrest in time to prevent the gun’s delivery.

10/21/21 On October 14 a 14-year old member of a Los Angeles gang [shot and wounded an LAPD detective](#) who was driving to work. He was arrested in the area with the unserialized “ghost gun” used in the attack. That case led to a search warrant and the [discovery of an illicit ghost-gun making operation](#) in a tattoo parlor used by the gang. [An LAPD report](#) reveals that 863 ghost guns were seized during the first six months of 2021, compared with 217 during that period in 2020. Detectives have connected these untraceable guns to over one-hundred violent crimes this year, including 24 murders and eight attempts. San Diego recently enacted a law barring ghost guns, and Los Angeles seeks to follow in its footsteps.

8/13/21 The pistol that Joseph Jimenez, 20, a schizophrenic off his meds used to murder a couple at a Corona movie theater on July 27 was described by deputies as an unserialized “ghost gun.” Jimenez was too young to purchase a handgun at retail. He had been at the movie theater with friends, but they left when his behavior made them uncomfortable. Officers recovered the gun and the male victim’s wallet at Jimenez’s home.

8/11/21 Deonte Lee Murray was arrested for the ambush shooting of L.A. Sheriff's deputies Claudia Apolinar and Emmanuel Perez-Perez as they sat in their patrol car on Sept. 12, 2020. Murray used a "ghost" pistol, which was later recovered. Neither deputy has been able to return to duty. They have sued Polymer80, the maker of the gun kit, as it must have known that offering unserialized, untraceable guns enables felons such as Murray, who is prohibited from having guns, to acquire and misuse them. (See 9/29/23 update).

8/7/21 Beset by "ghost guns" — its police have recovered 255 so far this year — San Diego's city council introduced an ordinance that prohibits possessing and transferring unserialized guns and frames. Persons who wish to assemble a gun from a kit would have to apply to the State Department of Justice to obtain a serial number. That requires passing a criminal records check. [A California State law](#) that will require sellers of gun parts kits to be licensed and conduct background checks will take effect in July 2022.

7/7/21 Declaring a "[gun violence emergency](#)" that particularly besets "poor, Black and Latino communities," New York Governor Andrew Cuomo pledged \$139 million to fund jobs and deploy violence interrupters in inner-city neighborhoods. [Ditto Los Angeles](#), where most of the burden also falls on poor neighborhoods. "There too many guns in too many hands," says LAPD Cpt. Stacy Spell. "Ghost guns," he noted, are proliferating. As of June officers have seized 661. That's close to last year's total haul of 813.

5/7/21 To combat the plague of unserialized, untraceable "ghost guns" ATF is seeking to do away with the "eighty-percent" rule. A proposed regulation would redefine a firearm "frame or receiver" to include "any externally visible housing or holding structure" for a "fire control component" such as the hammer or bolt. Any such housing that "has reached a stage in manufacture where it may readily be completed, assembled, converted, or restored to a functional state" would require manufacturer markings and a serial number and be subject to all the controls normally imposed on firearms.

4/29/21 Posting complete designs online for 3-D printed "ghost guns" is once again legal. An injunction that prohibited it because of the risk that such weapons might be used for terrorism was challenged by a 3D company, and their position was upheld by a panel of judges from the Federal 9th. Circuit.

4/27/21 Following [Arizona's lead](#), Montana enacted a law that prohibits State or local employees from assisting in the enforcement of any present or future Federal ban on firearms, magazines, or ammunition. [Arizona law](#) [Montana law](#)

4/10/21 Attorney General Merrick B. Garland announced four initiatives to fight the increase of gun violence: (1) An updated ATF study of firearms trafficking that addresses new technologies, such as 3D printers, that allow persons to make guns at home; (2) a regulatory fix that imposes background check and other requirements on the sale of kits

that consumers use to assemble unserialized “ghost guns”; (3) another regulatory fix that essentially prohibits the use of commercially-available “braces” to transform pistols into short-barreled rifles; (4) crafting of model protective order legislation to encourage more States to adopt Red Flag laws.

4/9/21 President Biden announced a regulatory initiative that would expand the definition of a firearm to include kits that presently allow persons to assemble unserialized “ghost guns.” Regulations would also keep manufacturers from transforming rifles into so-called “pistols,” such as the gun recently used in the Boulder massacre, by the expedient of replacing stocks with “braces.” But other gun-control moves, such as a ban on importing assault weapons, would require legislation, and in this political environment enacting new Federal gun laws seems a reach.

3/27/21 [In a recent meeting](#) with firearms industry representatives, ATF suggested expanding its regulatory definition of a firearm to cut back on the proliferation of readily assembled, unserialized “ghost guns,” which are being used in violent crime. The reception was unenthusiastic. [In December ATF agents searched](#) the premises of [Polymer80](#), a purveyor of “80 percent” pistol and assault rifle kits. ATF reportedly considered its handgun kits to be guns. But Polymer80 remains in business.

3/12/21 In 2015 [Dylan Roof](#) murdered nine church parishioners in South Carolina with a gun he bought at retail. Although he was Federally prohibited from acquiring firearms because he was a drug user, the FBI did not discover his drug arrest within the three days allotted for background checks. [So Roof automatically got his gun](#). A flood of gun sales has also burdened the “Insta-Check” system, [leading to “more than 4,800” gun transfers in 2018](#) to prohibited buyers. On March 11 [the House passed a bill](#) that would extend background checks to seven days, require them for transactions at gun shows and between private parties, and ban the manufacture and transfer of unserialized “ghost guns.”

2/24/21 State criminal history checks are required for sales by gun dealers. However, Federal law ([18 USC 922\[t\]](#)) allows transfers to proceed after three days should a check remains incomplete. Gun crimes [have been committed](#) by prohibited persons who took advantage of such delays. President Biden will reportedly sponsor regulations to correct this loophole and, as well, require criminal checks of persons who wish to assemble unserialized “ghost guns” from parts.

2/19/21 Baltimore police report that during 2020 officers recovered “more than three times” the number of untraceable “ghost guns” that were seized in 2019, when 119 were confiscated. A revision to Maryland law to bar persons from assembling their own guns has been proposed.

12/28/20 ATF rulings that to be legally defined as a firearm gun parts must be altered so the results equal “80 percent” of a working gun are being criticized in a Federal lawsuit filed by seventeen state attorney generals. They claim that fully operational “Ghost Guns” are easily assembled and constitute a ready source of unserialized, unregulated guns for criminals. Many are being recovered in homicides. Click [here](#) for a plaintiff's analysis of the controversy.

11/12/20 One year ago a 16-year old Southern California high school student [shot and killed two classmates](#) with an unregulated, unserialized .45 cal. pistol that was built from an “80-percent” frame. He then shot himself in the head. [A recent lawsuit](#) filed by the Giffords law Center, the victims’ parents and the State of California demands that ATF revise its definition of “firearm” to include these parts.

5/18/20 A.G. William Barr revealed that after Apple refused to help, the FBI eventually managed to unlock the iPhones possessed by Mohammed Alshamrani, the Saudi military student who opened fire at Pensacola. According to Barr, Alshamrani joined the Saudi air force “to carry out a ‘special operation’” for al-Qaida and used end-to-end encryption to communicate with his handlers. Barr stated that “our national security cannot remain in the hands of big corporations who put dollars over lawful access and public safety” and that a “legislative solution” is necessary. [A.G. Barr’s prepared remarks](#)

4/17/20 In testimony before the [President’s Commission on Law Enforcement](#), a high-ranking ATF official identified “privately made firearms” as an important and “increasingly more common” gun source for criminals. Other sources mentioned included theft and straw purchase.

3/12/20 “Ghost gun” kits were banned by law in the District of Columbia. According to authorities, untraceable guns assembled from “eighty percent” kits were used in four recent D.C. homicides and the attempted murder of two police reserve officers.

3/1/20 On February 26 Anthony Ferrill, 51, an electrician, opened fire at the Milwaukee brewery where he was employed, killing five coworkers and himself. Ferrill had been in long-running disputes at work. Ferrill used two handguns, one reportedly equipped with a silencer. According to a neighbor, Ferrill was a hobbyist who assembled his own guns. He was [twice charged with assault](#) in the past, and had once allegedly pointed a gun at a vehicle.

1/24/20 Concerned about the acquisition of untraceable “ghost” guns by criminals and terrorists, twenty States and D.C. are suing to prevent the Federal government from taking steps to reverse rules that, as presently interpreted, forbid posting plans for 3-D printed guns on the Internet.

1/17/20 Federal agents arrested reputed Maryland white supremacists Brian Lemley Jr. and Garfield Bilbrough IV, both from Maryland, and Patrik Mathews, an illegal

immigrant from Canada on conspiracy and gun charges. According to a [Federal criminal complaint](#), Lemley obtained an assault rifle upper receiver by mail order. He and Mathews then used this item and other gun parts to make a machine gun, which they fired at a range. They also allegedly acquired body armor and 1,500 rounds of ammunition. All three had intended to attend a rally in Virginia to protest its gun laws.