



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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**Salem Area Drug Trafficker and Ghost Gun Manufacturer Indicted in
Federal Court**

68 firearms and dozens of firearm components seized in raids targeting defendant

PORTLAND, Ore.—A federal grand jury in Portland returned an indictment today charging a Salem, Oregon man for distributing counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl and operating the largest known privately made firearm or “ghost gun” manufacturing workshop in Oregon from the basement of his home.

Tyler Ray Harnden, 29, a Salem resident, has been charged with possessing with intent to distribute fentanyl and heroin, distribution of fentanyl, possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, and illegally possessing a firearm as a convicted felon.

According to court documents, on February 16, 2022, federal agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and detectives from the Salem Police Department’s Criminal Investigations Section and Strategic Investigations Unit executed a federal search warrant on Harnden’s Salem residence. During their search, investigators discovered a large ghost gun manufacturing operation containing dozens of homemade firearm components and firearms in various stages of completion. Investigators also found and seized two pistols, three completed ghost guns, thousands of rounds of ammunition, 15 loaded high-capacity magazines, three drill presses and other assorted firearm manufacturing equipment, and approximately 200 counterfeit oxycodone pills containing fentanyl.

Following his arrest, agents discovered additional evidence that Harnden had allegedly been paying people to conduct illegal straw purchases of firearms for him. Harnden would also use people with substance use disorders to purchase firearms for him in exchange for counterfeit oxycodone pills manufactured with fentanyl. Agents also learned that Harnden was storing firearms at a relative’s house and had tried to convince the relative to sell some of his firearms to generate money for his jail spending account. On March 15, 2022, ATF agents and Salem SIU detectives obtained and executed a federal search warrant on the relative’s house and seized four gun safes and 63 additional firearms belonging to Harnden.

Harnden is in state custody on a supervised release violation and will be arraigned on his federal indictment at a later date. If convicted, Harnden faces a maximum sentence of life in federal prison.

Acting U.S. Attorney Scott Erik Asphaug of the District of Oregon made the announcement.

This case was investigated by ATF and the Salem Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott M. Kerin is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is only an accusation of a crime, and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Ghost guns are homemade firearms without serial numbers assembled from kits or materials sold without background checks, making them easily acquired by criminals who otherwise would not be permitted to possess a firearm and nearly impossible for law enforcement to track. In May 2021, the Justice Department issued a [notice of proposed rulemaking](#) that would update the definition of “firearm” and related parts for the first time since 1968. This updated definition would close a regulatory loophole associated with un-serialized, privately-made firearms increasingly being recovered at crime scenes across the country.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). PSN is the centerpiece of the Department of Justice’s violent crime reduction efforts. PSN is an evidence-based program proven to be effective at reducing violent crime. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders work together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

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