



# Department of Justice

**United States Attorney Melinda Haag  
Northern District of California**

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**FORMER RICHMOND POLICE OFFICERS  
CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY TO TAMPER WITH WITNESSES**

*One Officer Also Charged with Making False Statements  
In Order to Purchase Firearms for Other Individuals, Including Two Minors*

SAN FRANCISCO – A federal grand jury in San Francisco indicted Danny Harris Jr. of Pinole, Calif., on July 21, 2011, with making false statements in order to purchase three semiautomatic pistols from a San Jose, Calif., firearms dealer. Both Harris and Raymond Thomas Jr. of Fairfield, Calif., were charged with conspiring to tamper with witnesses and obstruct a federal investigation and court proceedings, United States Attorney Melinda Haag announced.

According to the indictment, both defendants were police officers with the Richmond Police Department when the offenses took place. Harris is alleged to have made false statements to a federal firearms dealer in San Jose in connection with the purchase of three semiautomatic handguns. According to the indictment, Harris falsely stated that he was the true buyer of the guns, when he knew that the true buyers were other individuals. In the case of two of the weapons, the true purchasers were individuals under twenty-one years of age. Under federal law, it would have been illegal for the dealer to knowingly sell the handguns to someone under twenty-one.

The indictment also charges that after Harris made the false statements in connection with the gun purchases, he and defendant Thomas conspired to knowingly use intimidation, threats and corrupt persuasion in order to prevent or hinder witnesses from reporting information to federal law enforcement officers. The defendants are charged with conspiring to obstruct, influence and impede a federal grand jury investigation and proceedings in federal court.

The indictment describes a series of acts undertaken by Harris and Thomas to intimidate the two minors for whom Harris purchased the firearms in order to prevent them from reporting possible federal crimes to federal law enforcement and to influence and obstruct a federal investigation. The acts included pressuring one of the minors to change the registration of one of the guns so that it no longer showed up in Harris' name; using intimidation tactics, including threats of legal action and the filing of a civil suit, in order to get possession of one of the guns from the minor; and hiring a private investigator in Concord, Calif., to conduct a sting operation targeting the two minors for whom Harris purchased firearms. The alleged goal of the sting operation was to have the minors arrested for drunk driving and illegal possession of the guns. The indictment alleges that Thomas paid more than \$1,800 to the private investigator in order to conduct the sting operation. The indictment alleges that Harris and Thomas approved of the plan whereby a female employee of the private investigator would meet one of the minors and make overtures in order to engage in future social engagements. The plan was for the woman to encourage the minor to bring his gun to one of those meetings. According to the indictment, the woman did meet the minor and they exchanged cell phone numbers. Through text messages, they set up a social engagement and the woman asked the minor to bring his gun to the engagement.

The defendants are scheduled to make their initial appearances in federal court in Oakland on Aug. 9, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. before United States Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler.

The maximum statutory penalty for each count of making a false statement in the acquisition of a firearm, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §922(a)(6), as alleged in counts one through three of the indictment, is 10 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, three years supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. The maximum statutory penalty for making a false statement in the record of a licensed firearms dealer, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §924(a)(1)(A), as alleged in count four of the indictment, is five years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, three years supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. The maximum statutory penalty for conspiracy to prevent communication to a law enforcement officer, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §1512(k), as alleged in count five, and for conspiracy to impede an official proceeding, also in violation of 18 U.S.C. §1512(k), as alleged in count six, is 20 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, three years supervised release, and a \$100 special assessment. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. §3553.

Susan Badger is the Assistant U.S. Attorney who is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Rania Ghawi and Cristhian Escobar. The prosecution is the result of an eleven-month investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Police Department, and the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office.

*Please note, an indictment contains only allegations against an individual and, as with all defendants, Mr. Harris and Mr. Thomas must be presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*

**Further Information:**

Case #: CR 11-0497 CW

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/can](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/can).

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at [www.cand.uscourts.gov](http://www.cand.uscourts.gov).

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Jack Gillund at (415) 436-6599 or by e-mail at [Jack.Gillund@usdoj.gov](mailto:Jack.Gillund@usdoj.gov).

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