

Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York

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Over 250 illegal guns sold in undercover NYPD investigation: 19 indicted

Firearms transported from North and South Carolina for sale in New York City

New York City Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN, New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY, New York City Mayor MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, Manhattan District Attorney CYRUS R. VANCE, Jr., Kings County District Attorney CHARLES J. HYNES, Chief of Police RONNIE YARBOROUGH, of the Sanford, N.C. Police Department, and Chief of Police CHRIS WATTS, of the Rock Hill, S.C. Police Department, announced today the indictment and arrest of 19 members of two loosely-organized gun trafficking groups that illegally funneled firearms from North and South Carolina into New York City, where the black market guns fetch at least three times their original price. The undercover investigation by the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Firearms Investigation Unit (FIU) resulted in 254 guns being removed from the streets of New York City.

A 552-count indictment filed by the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor centers on 208 guns sold for approximately \$160,000 over the past year. The 19 defendants face numerous counts of Conspiracy, Criminal Sale of a Firearm, Criminal Possession of a Weapon and other crimes. Among those charged are WALTER WALKER, a resident of Sanford, N.C., and EARL CAMPBELL, a resident of Rock Hill, S.C., who personally transported guns to New York City. These two defendants operated independently of one another, but utilized similar methods and shared a common Brooklyn-based broker, OMOLE ADEDJI, who negotiated sales to prospective firearms purchasers in New York City.

A long-term wiretap investigation, which evolved from a narcotics case, utilized an undercover NYPD FIU detective, who met with the defendants on more than 45 occasions for gun purchases. Sales charged in the indictment totaled \$157,625, with the majority of the transactions involving multiple weapons.

Between September 2012 and July 2013, both WALKER and CAMPBELL made numerous trips between their home states and New York City, personally transporting as many as 14 illegal firearms at a time in their luggage on trips north. Their preferred mode of travel was bus lines operating in the vicinity of Manhattan's Chinatown. Sales generally took place within hours of WALKER or CAMPBELL arriving in New York with a load of guns.

Each trafficker tapped a network of individuals in his home town with access to black market weapons or the willingness to purchase guns, knowing they would be illegally resold in New York City. At least one individual acted as a straw buyer and shopped at gun stores for WALKER. WALKER and CAMPBELL also cultivated associates in New York City, who assisted them in securing buyers and conducting the sales. ADEDJI was one such associate used by both gun traffickers.

Firearms sales charged in the indictment ran the gamut from .22 caliber pistols to seven assault weapons. Among the guns sold were a full automatic Cobray 9mm machine gun with a 30-round high-capacity magazine, three Intertec 9 assault pistols with flash suppressors and high-capacity magazines holding 30 or more rounds, a SCCY Industries 9mm handgun and a Norinco SKS 7.62 x 39 mm assault rifle. Approximately 36 of the 208 guns charged in the indictment had been reported stolen. Agents with the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are in the process of tracing the weapons.

The investigation was spearheaded by the NYPD's Firearms Investigation Unit and the Special Investigation Bureau of the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, working closely with New York County District Attorney's Office and the Kings County District Attorney's Office. The City of Sanford, N.C. Police Department, the Rock Hill, S.C. Police Department, the York County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit, and the Lee County, N.C. Sheriff's Office participated in the investigation and arrests.

Of the 19 individuals charged in the indictment, 16 were apprehended in New York City, North Carolina and South Carolina in a series of arrests that began on Aug. 2. The remaining three were already incarcerated on unrelated charges. Assisting in the arrests were three U.S. Marshals-led fugitive task forces: the Joint Fugitive Task Force (JFTF) of the Middle District, North Carolina, the Western North Carolina Violent Offender Task Force and Operation Intercept (OPIN) in South Carolina.

The Office of the District Attorney for Wake County, N.C., the Office of the District Attorney for Mecklenburg County, N.C, the Office of the District Attorney for Harnett & Lee County, N.C., the Office of the District Attorney for Guilford County, N.C., and the Solicitor's Office, Sixteenth Judicial District, for York & Union Counties, S.C. processed arrests and provided other assistance.

Using wiretaps, investigators identified those in the Sanford, N.C. and Rock Hill, S.C. areas supplying guns to WALKER and CAMPBELL for the purpose of re-selling the weapons in New York. The investigation revealed that gun sellers recognized New York's tough gun laws made selling weapons in New York profitable. Investigators closely monitored WALKER and CAMPBELL to ensure that the undercover detective purchased all available guns coming to New York City.

Seven defendants, including three Brooklyn residents, were arraigned in Manhattan Supreme Court, where Justice Bonnie G. Wittner is presiding over the case. Another nine defendants are currently in custody in North Carolina. Six of these individuals, including WALKER and CAMPBELL, are contesting extradition.

During the arrest operations, defendant JEREMIAH DEVON McDOUGALD allegedly robbed an individual at gunpoint while on the run from authorities in North Carolina, triggering an extensive manhunt. McDOUGALD was arrested on Aug. 7 as a result of a joint effort by officers, deputies and detectives from the Sanford Police Department, the U.S. Marshals JFTF, Middle District, N.C., and NYPD FIU. In addition to gun charges filed in New York, McDOUGALD is being prosecuted by the Guilford County District Attorney's Office in North Carolina in connection with the robbery.

Another defendant who became a fugitive, CHRIS HILL, evaded arrest for nearly two weeks before he was apprehended on Aug. 14 by the Sanford, N.C. Police Department. HILL was in possession of a firearm at the time. In addition to the charges in the New York indictment, HILL also faces prosecution as a felon in possession of a firearm in North Carolina.

Walker Conspiracy: North Carolina to New York

In the first conspiracy charged in the indictment, which ran from September 2012 to July 2013, WALKER sold 116 guns for a total of approximately \$82,000 during 19 meetings with the undercover detective. Among those weapons charged in the indictment by WALKER were 114 operable firearms, including five assault weapons and a machine gun. Two additional firearms were inoperable and two of the guns were defaced.

The investigation revealed that WALKER, a resident of Sanford, N.C., made frequent trips by bus to New York City for the purpose of selling firearms. Initially the sales took place in Brooklyn, where OMOLE ADEDJI, a Brooklyn resident, was involved in setting up these transactions for WALKER.

At the outset of the investigation, dubbed "Operation Up on the Hill," WALKER used a rap studio at 1991 Atlantic Avenue in the Ocean Hill section of Brooklyn as his New York base of operations. The rap studio, run by defendant MATTHEW BEST, was the scene of 11 of WALKER's guns sales to the undercover officer as charged in the indictment. BEST and several other defendants were present during gun sales at the studio, where the weapons were often laid out in the open. On some occasions, these individuals directly assisted WALKER in conducting the transactions. Sales also took place in other locations in Brooklyn.

Defendants BEST, DEVON TAYLOR, CHRISTOPHER SEAGRAVES, DAQUAN TINSLEY, and TARRELL FRANCHON FLOW are charged with conspiring to help WALKER with the New York City sales. ADEDJI's participation ended in November 2012.

On one occasion in December 2012, BEST was observed picking up WALKER at a bus stop in Chinatown and driving him to the rap studio. That same day, WALKER sold five firearms to the undercover officer in a meeting at the studio. In February 2013, BEST and TAYLOR assisted WALKER in the largest sale of the investigation: 14 guns for \$9,700.

Beginning in April, the undercover detective and WALKER shifted their meeting place to the vicinity of Grand Street and Chrystie Street in Manhattan's Lower East Side, near WALKER's bus stop. Later, WALKER brought firearms to New York by car, accompanied by FLOW.

In obtaining firearms, WALKER tapped a network of individuals in his home town of Sanford, N.C. with access to black market firearms. The indictment charges IESHA CARMICHAEL, JEREMIAH DEVON McDOUGALD, CORDERO ROLLINS, CHRIS HILL and TAJAMMAL SHARIEF BROWN with conspiring to supply WALKER with firearms and ammunition in North Carolina for the purposes of illegally transporting and selling them in New York City, as well as numerous substantive counts.

The wiretap component of the investigation, which began in January, revealed that the above named co-conspirators communicated with WALKER and each other via cellphone conversations and text messages, including messages containing photographs of potential gun purchases.

In May 2013, WALKER and HILL discussed potential profits from a firearm that HILL had acquired. HILL told WALKER, "It's a 32. I figured it's going up to New York. So you know what I'm saying... That... worth way more than 175."

Under WALKER's direction, in February 2013, CARMICHAEL underwent a background check and obtained 10 permits from the Lee County Sheriff's Office to purchase 10 firearms, as required under North Carolina State law. However, CARMICHAEL illegally received money to purchase the firearms from WALKER and turned the weapons over to him.

Campbell Conspiracy: South Carolina to New York

In the second conspiracy charged in the indictment, which ran from October 2012 to July 2013, CAMPBELL illegally sold 90 guns during 24 meetings with the undercover detective for a total of nearly

\$75,000. Two assault weapons were among the 82 operable firearms sold. Also sold were four rifles, two shotguns and two inoperable firearms. A total of five guns were defaced.

The investigation revealed that CAMPBELL, a resident of Rock Hill, S.C., made frequent trips by bus to New York City for the purpose of selling firearms. Initially the sales took place in Brooklyn, where OMOLE ADEDJI, a Brooklyn resident, was involved in setting up transactions.

In January 2013, at approximately the same time that the wiretap component of the investigation began, the undercover detective began meeting CAMPBELL in Manhattan in the vicinity of Grand Street and Chrystie Street, near where the bus from South Carolina dropped him off. CAMPBELL sold up to nine guns at a time. KENDALL DANIELLE JONES, also from Rock Hill, S.C., sometimes travelled to New York City with CAMPBELL by bus.

During the first meeting in Manhattan, JONES attempted to assemble a Norinco SKS 7.62 x 39 mm assault rifle from parts contained in a zebra-striped suitcase. After several frustrated attempts, JONES consulted an instructional video on her smartphone and enlisted CAMPBELL's help in trying to assemble the rifle. Ultimately, the undercover detective told them he would accept the firearm in pieces. The agreed upon price was \$1,100.

At the second Manhattan meeting, CAMPBELL sold the undercover detective three firearms and said, "The problem is that the gun laws passed now, so it's like now I can only buy a gun from a gun store every thirty days. So I had to, like, pay different people to keep buying different guns." CAMPBELL mischaracterized the gun laws in South Carolina, where a one-handgun-a-month provision was repealed in 2004.

The indictment charges WARQUISHA MICHAUX, LARICK MICHAUX, MARCEL LYDELL DYESS, ARTHUR ANTONIO BARBER, and BRANDON RASHAD POTTS with conspiring to supply CAMPBELL with firearms in South Carolina for sale in New York, as well as numerous substantive counts. The defendants communicated with one another by cellphone about acquiring and selling guns and ammunition.

The wiretap investigation revealed that CAMPBELL routinely requested photos of guns available for purchase from his South Carolina co-conspirators. CAMPBELL forwarded these pictures to the undercover detective in the course of negotiating sales in New York City.

Conversations between CAMPBELL and several South Carolina gun suppliers demonstrate the suppliers' knowledge of CAMPBELL's practice of buying and transporting guns for sale in New York City.

In an April 2013 conversation paraphrased in the indictment, CAMPBELL told LARICK MICHAUX to stop complaining about his share of the profits from selling firearms in New York. CAMPBELL asserted that he was assuming all the risk of getting caught, while LARICK MICHAUX would never have to worry about law enforcement. A week later, LARICK MICHAUX told CAMPBELL he was understating the amount of money he could sell firearms for in New York, where even firecrackers are prohibited.

In a June 2013 conversation that a Special Narcotics Assistant District Attorney cited in bail arguments for LARICK MICHAUX in Manhattan Supreme Court on Thursday, Aug. 15, CAMPBELL and LARICK MICHAUX discussed the risk of getting stopped by police when bringing guns to Brownsville, Brooklyn. The conversation came just prior to CAMPBELL making one of his trips north. LARICK MICHAUX asked CAMPBELL whether he was "still in the city?" and then CAMPBELL replied, "Yeah I'm in Charlotte now. I, I can't leave until you come cause I can't take them...to my house, to my side of town cause I'm, umm, I'm in Brownsville. So we got like, we got like umm, uh, whatchamacallit, stop and frisk."

Some of the South Carolina gun suppliers also encouraged CAMPBELL to buy ammunition. In May 2013, LARICK MICHAUX's sister WARQUISHA MICHAUX sent a text message to CAMPBELL arguing

that a gun without bullets is like carrying stick: "wats tha point of a gun if u ain't got tha ammo mite as well get a stick." In another text, WARQUISHA MICHAUX referred to bullets as "cop killers."

Special Narcotics Prosecutor BRIDGET G. BRENNAN thanked Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY and the NYPD's Firearms Investigation Unit, Manhattan District Attorney CYRUS R. VANCE, Jr., Kings County District Attorney CHARLES J. HYNES, the Sanford, N.C. Police Department, the Rock Hill, S.C. Police Department, the York County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Unit, and all participating local, state and federal agencies for their extraordinary level of cooperation.

"Today we have charged criminal opportunists who sought to take advantage of the nation's patchwork of conflicting gun regulation to line their own pockets and promote mayhem in New York City," said BRIDGET G. BRENNAN. "Law enforcement agencies across many jurisdictions worked side by side to round up those who selfishly sought to promote their financial interests at great cost to our city residents."

"Every day, New York City police officers must perform incredibly dangerous work to prevent guns from getting into criminal hands," said Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY. "It is impossible to know exactly how many victims might have suffered had officers not identified and investigated these gun traffickers. But thanks to the undercover officer in this case and the efforts of the NYPD Firearms Investigations Unit and prosecutors, instead of being used in crimes these guns are now out of commission."

"New York is the safest big city in the nation, but year after year, illegal guns flow into our city from states that don't have common-sense laws that keep guns out of the hands of criminals," said Mayor MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG. "There is no doubt that the seizure of these guns – the largest bust in the city's history – has saved lives. For that reason, every New Yorker, in every part of our city, owes a debt of thanks to all those involved in this investigation."

Manhattan District Attorney CYRUS R. VANCE, Jr., said, "Our number one job in law enforcement is to keep people safe. But all too frequently, senseless gun violence is facilitated by traffickers who bring in firearms from other states. Any effective public safety strategy must include targeting these traffickers and taking illegal guns off city streets. As a result of this investigation, more than 200 guns that could have been used to maim, harm, and kill New Yorkers will now be out of circulation."

Kings County District Attorney CHARLES J. HYNES said, "I want to commend Special Narcotics Prosecutor Bridget Brennan, NYPD Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and all the assembled authorities for participating in this operation. This is a perfect example of how law enforcement agencies from varied jurisdictions working together can successfully combat the interstate shipment of deadly weapons. These guns serve no lawful purpose, they are a plague on our communities and those who profit from their illegal sales will face the stiffest penalties the law allows."

Rock Hill Police Chief CHRIS WATTS said, "The Rock Hill Police Department is always willing to assist other Law Enforcement agencies investigating crimes that affect our communities. I would like to commend the New York Police Department and their Firearms Investigation Unit on this outstanding accomplishment."

INDICTED DEFENDANTS

CHARGES

Adedji Omole aka "Omole Adedji"	Conspiracy 4th -- 2 cts
9/8/82	Criminal Sale of a Firearm 1st -- 2 cts
Former: 18 Roosevelt Place	Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 3 cts
Brooklyn, NY	Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 64 cts
Current: Maryland Correctional	Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 1st -- 1 ct
Institution, Jessup, MD	Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 3 cts
	Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd -- 2 cts
	Att. Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 1 ct

Walter Walker 11/26/83 210 West Weatherspoon St. Sanford, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 1st -- 3 cts Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 13 cts Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 228 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 1st -- 2 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 28 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd -- 8 cts Att. Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 2 cts
Earl Campbell 12/20/89 898 Rolling Green Rd. Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 1st -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 6 cts Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 164 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 57 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd -- 6 cts Att. Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct Att. Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 2 cts
Larick Michaux 02/26/87 843 Jefferson Ave. Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 1st -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 32 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 12 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd -- 2 cts
Warquisha Michaux aka "Choppers" 11/24/84 843 Jefferson Ave. Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 10 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 3 cts
Kendall Danielle Jones 08/29/90 758 Patriot Parkway Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 2 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd -- 1 ct
Matthew Best aka "Neno Best" 7/19/87 185 Linden Blvd. Brooklyn, NY	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct
Christopher Seagraves 07/03/87 109 N. 7th St. Sanford, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 12 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct
Tajammal Sharief Brown aka "Taj" 10/25/92 Former: 905 Audubon Ave. S. Goldsboro, NC Current: Polk Correctional Institution Butner, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 8 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 4 ct
Cordero Rollins aka "Dero" 7/15/88 213 Linden Ave. Sanford, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 8 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 4 ct
Devon Taylor 08/05/90 176 Albany Ave. Brooklyn, NY	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct

Marcel Lydell Dyess, II 05/26/92 Former: 1423 Spring View Ct. Rock Hill, SC Current: Wateree River Correctional Institution, Rembert, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 2 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct
Arthur Antonio Barber aka "Barber" 08/12/86 928 Rivercrest Rd. Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 2 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct
Chris Hill 1/25/89 928 Rivercrest Rd. Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 2 cts
Brandon Rashad Potts 5/27/89 1115 Green Street Ext. Rock Hill, SC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 4 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 2 cts
Daquan Tinsley 7/17/86 256 Saratoga Ave. Brooklyn, NY	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 14 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd -- 1 ct
Tarell Francheon Flow 5/19/87 1109 Juniper Dr. Sanford, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd -- 1 ct Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd -- 18 cts Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd -- 1 ct
Iesha Carmichael aka "Tanisha" 4/19/87 311 Woodland Trails Sanford, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct
Jeremiah Devon McDougald 7/7/86 79 Pinehollow Dr. Broadway, NC	Conspiracy 4th -- 1 ct

The charges and allegations are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

NEW YORK GUN TRAFFICKING CHARGES AND SENTENCES

Charge	Non-Predicate	Predicate Felon	Violent Predicate Felon
Criminal Sale of a Firearm 1st Class B Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 5 and 25 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 8 and 25 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 10 and 25 years in prison
Criminal Sale of a Firearm 2nd Class C Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 3 ½ and 15 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 5 and 15 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 7 and 15 years in prison
Criminal Sale of a Firearm 3rd Class D Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 2 and 7 years in prison*	Determinate sentence between 3 and 7 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 5 and 7 years in prison

Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 1st Class B Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 5 and 25 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 8 and 25 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 10 and 25 years in prison
Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd Class C Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 3 ½ and 15 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 5 and 15 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 7 and 15 years in prison
Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd (Assault Weapon) Class D Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 2 and 7 years in prison*	Determinate sentence between 3 and 7 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 5 and 7 years in prison
Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd (Defaced Gun or Machine Gun) Class D Non- Violent Felony	Indeterminate sentence between no jail and 2 1/3 to 7 years in prison	Indeterminate sentence between 2 to 4 years in prison and 3 ½ to 7 years in prison	Indeterminate sentence between 2 to 4 years in prison and 3 ½ to 7 years in prison
Conspiracy in the 4th Degree Class E Non- Violent Felony	Indeterminate sentence between no jail and 1 1/3 to 4 years in prison	Indeterminate sentence between 1 ½ to 3 years in prison and 2 to 4 years in prison	Indeterminate sentence between 1 ½ to 3 years in prison and 2 to 4 years in prison
Att. Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 2nd Class D Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between 2 and 7 years in prison*	Determinate sentence between 3 and 7 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 5 and 7 years in prison
Att. Criminal Poss. of a Weapon 3rd (Assault Weapon) Class E Violent Felony	Determinate sentence between no jail and 4 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 2 and 4 years in prison	Determinate sentence between 3 and 4 years in prison
Unlawful Poss. of a Rifle or Shotgun in New York City Unclassified Misdemeanor	Definite sentence of up to 1 year in jail	Definite sentence of up to 1 year in jail	Definite sentence of up to 1 year in jail

* The court may also impose a definite sentence of 1 year imprisonment or impose a sentence of less than one year imprisonment "if the court having regard to the nature and circumstances of the crime and to the history and character of the defendant, finds on the record that such sentence would be unduly harsh and that the alternative sentence would be consistent with public safety and does not depreciate the seriousness of the crime." PL §70.02(c)(i)