



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 23, 2011

ATF Linked to Border Agent's Murder

An operation run by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) known as Project Gunrunner has been implicated, albeit indirectly so far, in the December 2010 murder of Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry by alleged bandits in Arizona, reports the president of the Law Enforcement Officers Advocates Council Andy Ramirez in a new piece for the Liberty News Network. Now, Agent Terry's family wants answers and the Justice Department is apparently engaged in what critics are calling a "cover up."



In [documents](#) obtained by *The New American* magazine and [Liberty News Network](#), U.S. Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) [asked](#) the Department of Justice to respond to some of the shocking allegations originally shared with the Senate Judiciary Committee by ATF whistleblowers. They accused the agency of knowingly allowing straw buyers to purchase the weapons — even "sanctioning" the gun sales — which were then allegedly used in Agent Terry's killing.

In response to Sen. Grassley's original letter, Justice Department lawyers [asked](#) the Senator and his committee to stop speaking with law-enforcement personnel directly, even hinting that the probe could have been politically motivated. The Senator then wrote a [follow-up letter](#) to Attorney General Eric Holder explaining that the charges he was making were backed up by documentation. He also accused the DOJ of answering the concerns with "little more than delay and denial."

"[I]f not for the bravery and patriotism of law enforcement personnel who were willing to put their careers on the line, this Committee would have been forced to rely on nothing more than rumors in the blogosphere and a Justice Department denial to resolve these allegations," [wrote](#) Sen. Grassley in his response letter. "We need more than that. To be an effective check on Executive Branch power, we need cold, hard facts. We will seek them from whatever source is necessary," he added in response to the DOJ's request that Senate staff stop speaking with whistleblowers.

LNN national correspondent Ramirez referred to the Justice Department's reaction as "lawyering up," or shutting down alternative avenues of communication in order to maintain the appearance of a straight story via lawyers. "So they don't allow members of Congress to talk to personnel in order to keep that story," he said.

And while the DOJ claims no retaliation against the whistleblowers was undertaken, Ramirez explained that taking action against the brave officers who report problems is a frequent occurrence. "They do that so the truth doesn't get out," he noted.

Agent Terry's family has also started demanding answers. "I truly feel that our son's death is a cover-up and they hope that we will go away. That will not happen," wrote Carolyn Terry, the slain border officer's stepmother, in a letter cited by Sen. Grassley. "We want to know who allowed the sale of that gun that murdered our son ... We are the victims of this case and we want some answers."



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Grassley and the whistleblowers who first exposed the scandal have expressed support for the Terry family's right to the truth, as have numerous commentators. But citing an ATF agent's blog, Ramirez said the agency was indeed attacking agents who tell the truth – an illegal practice, as Sen. Grassley pointed out – in an effort to hide the facts.

"Hopefully Sen. Grassley and many others will get to the bottom of this because what a great betrayal of Agent Terry's memory," Ramirez concluded. "I'm certain this one is not going away soon."

Andy Ramirez is the founder and president of the Law Enforcement Officers Advocates Council, as well as founder and president of [Friends of the Border Patrol](#). [Liberty News Network](#) is an affiliated news group of [The John Birch Society](#).

Photo: Richard Barlow, deputy chief of the Border Patrol's Tucson sector, speaks to reporters on Dec. 15, 2010 in Tucson, Ariz., about the killing of agent Brian A. Terry: AP Images



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