



ATF NIBIN Program Hit of the Week

July 18, 2005

NIBIN Branch, Firearms Programs Division, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Week of July 18, 2005

The Houston Police Department Firearms Laboratory matched a test fire from a pistol seized during the course of a traffic stop to ballistic evidence recovered in a homicide case a month earlier by using the NIBIN system. The victim of a homicide was discovered floating in a bayou by neighborhood children playing in a park. Investigators found that the victim had been shot several times and the medical examiner was able to recover a bullet from the body and a spent shell casing from inside the blanket in which the body was wrapped. Both pieces of ballistic evidence were imaged into NIBIN. The investigation revealed some unusual circumstances. The victim was last seen five days before the discovery of her body when she dropped off friends after spending the day at the beach. Two days later the victim's vehicle was used by suspects in the attempted robbery of a pawn shop in Houston. An off duty police officer and the pawn shop owner exchanged gunfire with the suspects during the robbery. The suspects attempted to flee in the stolen vehicle, but one of the robbers was killed and the others left the vehicle behind. Approximately four weeks later, a police officer on patrol saw a suspect driving without a seat belt. He stopped the vehicle and noticed a strong odor of marijuana coming from inside. The officer found that the driver had no operator's license and he and his two passengers were all displaying gang signs. After securing all three occupants in the patrol car, a search of the suspect vehicle was conducted. Officers found a loaded pistol under the driver's seat and some marijuana in the back of the car. The pistol was submitted to the Houston Police Department Firearms Lab for test firing and entry into NIBIN, which resulted in a match to the ballistic evidence recovered in the homicide case.