

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



THOMAS J. SPOTA
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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More than 300 guns confiscated from unlicensed gunsmith's home near Centereach High School

Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota today announced the seizure of more than 300 weapons, most of them unlocked and unsecured and some of them loaded, from the home of an unlicensed gunsmith near Centereach High School.

Jay Steiner, 66, of 221 Tree Road, is free on \$25,000 bail, charged with one count of criminal possession of a weapon in the first degree.

"Mr. Steiner had no license in Suffolk County - or elsewhere - to operate a gunsmith business, nor did he have a Suffolk County pistol permit or a federal firearms license," DA Spota said.

"Plain and simple: He should not have had these guns, and the manner in which he stored these weapons is shocking."

District Attorney Spota said detectives assigned to the DA Gun Suppression Team executed a search warrant and recovered 85 illegally possessed handguns. "Five of the handguns were loaded and stored by the defendant in his unlocked bedroom dresser drawer, and there were another 5 unloaded handguns with ammo next to them," the district attorney said. "A loaded shotgun was also found hanging on the wall over the master bedroom closet, and a sixth loaded handgun, a Smith and Wesson .38 caliber revolver, was found by detectives hanging under Steiner's hat near the kitchen pantry door."

DA Spota said seven more handguns were found in Steiner's briefcase and another 67 handguns, found in two basement safes, were confiscated by Gun Team detectives.

"Most disturbingly," DA Spota said, "in the basement we recovered two gun parts – they're called "drop in auto sears" - a small piece of metal that, when installed onto an AR-15 rifle, converts the weapon into a machine gun.

"Under federal law, possession of the drop-in auto sears is considered as possession of a machine gun", Spota noted. The district attorney played video footage of a Suffolk County police officer shooting an AR-15 without the auto sear attachment, and then with the mechanism installed, effectively converting the weapon into a machine gun capable of firing 30-round clips in seconds.

DA Spota said a series of burglaries in Steiner's neighborhood raised even more concerns for law enforcement, considering the defendant's careless storage of firearms.

"If everything I just told you wasn't bad enough, the defendant's neighborhood was right in the middle of a pattern of residential burglaries, approximately 25 break-ins over the past year in the sector where his home is located," Spota said. "Experience tells us that burglars often go straight to the bedrooms of the home, especially the master bedroom, because that's where the jewelry is. In this house, a burglar would have found rifles, handguns and ammo throughout the house, weapons that surely would have ended up in wreaking havoc in our neighborhoods."



SCDA COMMUNICATIONS

Building 77 •North County Complex •Hauppauge, NY 11787

Robert.Clifford@suffolkcountyny.gov

A criminal charge is merely an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

