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Stillwater Man Sentenced To One Year In Federal Prison For His Role As A Straw Buyer Of Firearms In Scheme To Illegally Purchase And Transfer Military Type Semi-Automatic Rifles To Texas And Mexico

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 19, 2011

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma – Today, JORGE ALEXIS BLANCO, 26, of Stillwater, Oklahoma, was sentenced by United States District Judge Joe Heaton to serve twelve months and one day in federal prison for making a straw purchase of military type semi-automatic rifles, announced Sanford C. Coats, United States Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma.

Blanco was indicted in September of last year along with GREGORIO MORALES-MARTINEZ, 34, of Lewisville, Texas, who has pled guilty to conspiracy to illegally purchase military type semi-automatic rifles in Oklahoma and transfer them to Texas where some were smuggled into Mexico. The charges against Blanco and Morales-Martinez were related to charges filed against FRANCISCO JAVIER REYES, 29, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who has also pled guilty to conspiracy to illegally purchase military type semi-automatic rifles in Oklahoma and transfer them to Texas where some were smuggled into Mexico.

According to court records, Morales-Martinez, an illegal alien from Lewisville, Texas, paid Francisco Javier Reyes, 29, a former state narcotics agent from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to buy firearms and paid Reyes a commission based on the number of guns he delivered. Reyes bought some firearms himself, and also recruited and paid others, including Blanco, to go to gun stores to illegally purchase the firearms as "straw buyers" for Reyes. Reyes instructed the straw buyers to go to several federal firearm licensed dealers located in Oklahoma City to make the purchases and told them what firearms to buy. Federal law requires that each buyer of a firearm complete a Firearms Transaction Record (ATF Form 4473) certifying they are the "actual buyer of the firearm." The ATF Form 4473 warns the buyer that they are not the actual buyer if they are "acquiring the firearm(s) on behalf of another person," and that making a false statement on the form is a federal crime

Court records indicate that from March 2010 through July 2010, Reyes paid the straw buyers, including Blanco, to illegally purchase 34 separate firearms, including 29 Century AK-47 semi-automatic rifles, eight Chinese SKS 7.62 caliber semi-automatic rifles, and one Bushmaster .50 caliber semi-automatic rifle. Reyes also purchased additional firearms himself, including two Barrett .50 caliber semi-automatic rifles, five Century AK-47 semi-automatic rifles, and two ROMARM/CUGIR semi-automatic rifles. The straw buyers and Reyes all falsified the ATF Form 4473 for these purchases by certifying they were the actual buyers of the firearms, when they knew they were not. The straw buyers delivered the guns to Reyes who, in turn, delivered the guns to Morales-Martinez in Texas where serial numbers from some of the firearms were removed to make them more difficult to trace. Several of the firearms involved were recovered in Mexico or attempting to enter Mexico.

On November 16, 2010, Blanco pled guilty to making a straw purchase of five military type semi-automatic rifles. That same day, Morales-Martinez pled guilty to a conspiracy count alleging the illegal purchase of military type semi-automatic rifles in Oklahoma which were transferred to Texas, and a count alleging he caused another person to make a straw purchase of a military type rifle.

In addition to the twelve months and one day prison sentence, Judge Heaton ordered Blanco to serve two years of supervised release upon his release from prison and pay \$100 special assessment.

The sentencing hearing for Gregorio Morales-Martinez is scheduled for May 12, 2011, where he faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each of the two counts to which he pled guilty.

In the related case, Francisco Javier Reyes pled guilty on September 29, 2010, to a two-count Information alleging conspiracy count and transferring firearms out of state. Reyes is awaiting sentencing where he faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each count

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