



# Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office  
Southern District of Texas

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## **Baytown Man Gets More Federal Prison Time for Exportation of Firearms**

HOUSTON – Manuel Gomez Barba, of Baytown, Texas, has been sentenced to 100 months for exportation of firearms, United States Attorney Kenneth Magidson announced today along with Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) acting Special Agent in Charge Gary Orchowski and Immigration and Customs Enforcement – Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI) Special Agent in Charge Robert Rutt.

Barba, 30, pleaded guilty to one count of exportation of firearms on Oct. 31, 2011. Today, he was sentenced by United States District Judge Lynn N. Hughes to 100 months imprisonment which is to run consecutively to a 108-month sentence he received for conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine in a case prosecuted by the Eastern District of Texas.

Barba, who could not buy firearms due to being on deferred adjudication for two felony drug offenses from the Harris County, Texas, state courts, recruited individuals, known as straw buyers, to buy numerous AK-47 like semi-automatic firearms. Barba would inform the buyers that the firearms would not be traced back to them because Barba would have the serial numbers obliterated before they were sent to Mexico. Once the straw buyers bought the firearms and transferred the guns to him, Barba facilitated the transfer of the weapons to individuals who transported the firearms to Mexico for use by the Zeta Drug Cartel.

One of the firearms which Barba facilitated to Mexico was used by the Zetas in a shooting on Feb. 15, 2011, which resulted in the death of ICE-HSI special agent Jaime Zapata and serious wounding of a second ICE-HSI agent. It was determined through ballistic testing of the shell casings and the raising of the obliterated serial number that one of the firearms used in the shooting was bought at J&J's Pawn Shop in Beaumont, Texas. Once bought, the firearm, along with nine others bought that day, were transferred to Barba to be exported to Mexico. In total, Barba, who did not have a license to export firearms, was responsible for the exportation of 44 firearms to Mexico.

The investigation leading to the charges was conducted by the ATF and ICE-HSI. Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Lowery prosecuted the case.