



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

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**BROWNSVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR FIREARMS
TRAFFICKING**

(BROWNSVILLE, Texas) – Miguel De La Garza, 30, has been sentenced to prison for trafficking in firearms, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle announced today.

De La Garza, of Brownsville, pleaded guilty May 28, 2008, to conspiracy to make false statements in firearms transactions. On Wednesday, Oct. 1, U.S. District Judge Hilda Tagle sentenced De La Garza to 46 months in prison to be followed by a three-year-term of supervised release. In handing down the sentence, Judge Tagle concluded that De La Garza was an organizer/leader in this case and engaged in trafficking in firearms to Mexico. De La Garza has been in federal custody without bond since his arrest and will remain in custody to begin serving his sentence.

De La Garza was responsible for the straw purchases of 23 high-caliber rifles in a conspiracy with four other persons. De La Garza recruited his four co-defendants and paid them \$50 to \$100 to purchase firearms for him. The firearms were obtained from several Brownsville firearms dealers, including large chain stores and small local gun shops. The four co-defendants, Ester Zepeda, 24, of Harlingen, Anuar Pinales, 23, of San Benito, Brenda Ortega, 23, of Brownsville, and Roy Barrios, 24, of Los Fresnos, have also pleaded guilty to firearms charges for their roles in the conspiracy and have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from probation to 10 months in federal prison.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Esquivel

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