



## Department of Justice

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

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### Firearms Exporter and Straw Purchasers Head to Prison

McALLEN, Texas – A total of six local individuals have been ordered to federal prison for straw purchasing firearms, announced Acting U.S. Attorney Abe Martinez.

Jesus Alberto Murillo, 24, Rene Hernandez, 22, Miguel Cervantes, 22, Mariano Eberth Garcia, 22, and Felix Hernandez, 26, all of McAllen, and Marella Sandoval, 31, of Penitas, all previously pleaded guilty.

Today, U.S. District Judge Micaela Alvarez heard testimony from a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) special agent regarding the roles of the defendants in straw purchasing firearms that were unlawfully exported to Mexico for use by Cartel members. Judge Alvarez sentenced Murillo and Rene Hernandez to 115 months and 72 months in federal custody, respectively. The sentences were enhanced as the court found they were both a leader or supervisor in the offense. Felix Hernandez and Cervantes were sentenced to 60 and 24 months in federal custody, respectively.

At a hearing yesterday, Judge Alvarez sentenced Garcia to 50 months imprisonment.

U.S. District Judge Ricardo Hinojosa sentenced another individual involved in the offense, Carlos Alberto Zamudio, 34, McAllen, to a term of 48 months on April 24, 2017. Sandoval will be sentenced by Judge Alvarez on July 27, 2017.

The defendants sentenced today conducted or recruited others to conduct the straw purchase of firearms from various federal firearms licensees between September and October 2015. The investigation revealed that the defendants combined to purchase more than 100 firearms throughout the Rio Grande Valley. To date, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has learned that at least 14 of the purchased firearms were recovered in Mexico.

Murillo, Sandoval, Garcia, Felix and Rene Hernandez have been and will remain in federal custody. Cervantes was permitted to remain on bond and surrender to authorities at a later date.

The ATF conducted the investigation with the assistance of police departments in McAllen and Corpus Christi. Assistant U.S. Attorney Roberto Lopez Jr. is prosecuting the case.

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**Field Division:** Houston Field Division