



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

Robert Pitman, U.S. Attorney

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**FIREARMS DEALER SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON
IN COLUMBUS, NEW MEXICO FIREARMS TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATION**

United States Attorney Robert Pitman announced that in Las Cruces, NM, today, a federal judge sentenced 52-year-old Ian Garland, a federally licensed firearms dealer who did business as Chaparral Guns in Chaparral, NM, to five years in federal prison for his role in a firearms trafficking operation.

In addition to the prison term, United States District Judge Robert C. Brack ordered that Garland be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing his prison term.

In July 2011, Garland pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and six counts of making false statements in the acquisition of firearms. By pleading guilty, Garland admitted that from July 9, 2010, to February 24, 2011, he aided and abetted the straw purchases of approximately 193 firearms that were purchased at his business by Blas Gutierrez and other co-conspirators, including Eddie Espinoza, Alberto Rivera, Miguel Carrillo, Ricardo Gutierrez and Eva Gutierrez among others. The firearms that he sold this group were primarily AK-47 type pistols and 9 mm pistols. Garland further admitted that during these firearms purchases, he agreed to allow multiple purported purchasers to falsely state on ATF Form 4473's that he or she was the actual purchaser of the firearms. Garland also admitted that he then transferred the purchased firearms to Blas Gutierrez, Eddie Espinoza, Alberto Rivera, Miguel Carrillo, Ricardo Gutierrez, and Eva Gutierrez among others, having reason to know that the purchased firearms were illegally destined to people in Mexico.

Garland is the third of 12 convicted defendants, which include former Village of Columbus (NM) Police Chief Angelo Vega, former Village of Columbus Trustee Blas Gutierrez, and former Village of Columbus mayor Eddie Espinoza, to be sentenced in this case. No other sentencing dates have been scheduled.

The investigation was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), ICE Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) with assistance from the Comandante Chihuahua State Police in Palomas, Mexico and the Secretariat of Public Security in Juarez, Mexico. The U.S. Marshal's Service, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, New Mexico State Police, Las Cruces Police Department, El Paso Police Department as well as other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies also provided assistance during the investigation. The case is being prosecuted by District of New Mexico Assistant United States Attorney Nathan Lichvarcik as well as Western District of Texas Assistant United States Attorneys Greg McDonald and Steve Spitzer.

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