



Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

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EL PASO BUSINESS MANAGER SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON IN CONNECTION WITH AMMO SMUGGLING OPERATION

In El Paso this morning, 61-year-old Bryan Nelson Schonberg, former manager of Geneva Loan and Jewelry Co., was sentenced to four years in federal prison in connection with an ammunition smuggling operation announced United States Attorney Robert Pitman and ICE-HSI Acting Special Agent in Charge Dennis Ulrich.

In addition to the prison term, Senior U.S. District Judge David Briones ordered that Schonberg pay a \$5,000 fine and be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing his prison term. Judge Briones also ordered the forfeiture of approximately \$86,000 in cash seized from Schonberg's bank accounts and more than one million rounds of ammunition seized by federal authorities during this investigation.

"The smuggling of firearms and ammunition from the United States to Mexico fuels the terrible violence that has ravaged communities within Mexico, and we are committed to stopping smugglers like Mr. Schonberg from profiting from the distribution of these tools of the drug trade," stated United States Attorney Robert Pitman.

On August 15, 2012, Schonberg pleaded guilty to one count each of conspiracy to smuggle ammunition from the United States, conspiracy to smuggle high capacity firearms magazines conspiracy to commit money laundering. By pleading guilty, Schonberg admitted that from July 1, 2010, until July 27, 2011, he and others conspired to smuggle ammunition for AK-47 and AR-15 type firearms as well as high capacity firearms magazines from the United States into Mexico. The scheme involved the sale of these items to undercover agents. Schonberg also admitted that he directed others to repackage the magazines and ammunition from its original factory rigid cardboard boxes into taped bundles or plastic bags to make it easier to conceal from authorities.

Schonberg is the final defendant to be convicted and sentenced in connection with this investigation. Five other employees--Jaime Rangel, Guadalupe Gallegos, Cirilio Soriano, Elataria Pedroza and Raquel Galvan--have been sentenced to terms ranging from five years probation to 30 months in federal prison.

This investigation was conducted by agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI). Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

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