

For Immediate Release  
May 12, 2011

**ALBUQUERQUE MAN RECEIVES 60-MONTH PRISON  
SENTENCE FOR FEDERAL FIREARMS CONVICTION**

ALBUQUERQUE – Today in federal court in Albuquerque, New Mexico, **Mario Montoya**, a 24-year-old Albuquerque resident, was sentenced to a 60-month term of imprisonment to be followed by three-years of supervised release based on his conviction for being in possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Montoya was one of 32 defendants indicted on federal and state firearms offenses in June 2010 as part of Operation “Jokerz Traderz,” a long-term investigation designed to remove unlawfully possessed firearms from the streets of Albuquerque, and to target and prosecute felons in possession of such firearms. During the investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) operated an undercover store-front in Albuquerque, also aptly named “Jokerz Traderz.” ATF operated “Jokerz Traderz” as a thrift store at 1309 San Mateo Blvd. NE. Undercover agents purchased a variety of firearms from a substantial number of individuals, most of whom were later arrested as part of the operation. In total, 230 firearms were removed from the streets of Albuquerque never to be used again for any unlawful purpose.

Montoya was charged in four counts of a five-count indictment filed in the case on June 10, 2010. Count 4 of the indictment charged Montoya and his co-defendant Nicholas Johnson, 32, with possession of a stolen firearm. The indictment also charged Montoya with possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number (Count 1); possession of a stolen firearm (Count 2); and possession of a stolen firearm (Count 3). Count 5 charged co-defendant Nicholas Johnson as a felon in possession of a firearm.

Montoya was arrested on June 22, 2010, and has been in federal custody since that time. On November 22, 2010, Montoya entered a guilty plea to Count 1 of the indictment charging him with possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. At the conclusion of today's sentencing hearing, the court dismissed the remaining counts of the indictment against Montoya.

On March 2, 2011, co-defendant Johnson pled guilty to a criminal information charging him as a felon in possession of a firearm. Johnson was sentenced to a 57-month term of imprisonment to be followed by three-years of supervised release on April 6, 2011.

Assistant United States Attorney Linda Mott prosecuted the case, which was investigated by ATF.

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