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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FUGITIVE FIREARMS TRAFFICKER CAPTURED IN MEXICO
AS PART OF OPERATION RIPSAW**

Richard G. Frohling, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, announced the arrest of fugitive Roland Munoz (age: 44), who was wanted for trafficking firearms from the United States to a Mexican cartel.

On September 21, 2021, along with five other defendants, Munoz was charged in a 12-count indictment with violations of 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 (conspiracy to violate the laws of the United States), 554 (smuggling goods from the United States), 922(a)(6), and 924(a)(2) (straw purchasing firearms), and 22 U.S.C. §§ 2778(b)(2) and 2778(c) and 22 C.F.R. §§ 121.1 and 127.1 (violation of the Arms Export Control Act and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations). In turn, the indictment was the result of a yearslong investigation called "Operation Ripsaw" and led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

The indictment charges a complex conspiracy to smuggle high-powered firearms from the United States to Mexico. According to court filings, Munoz led this conspiracy by recruiting straw purchasers of firearms in Wisconsin and other states, organizing couriers to transport those firearms and money across the nation, and arranging for smugglers to take the firearms across the border in Texas and provide them to a cartel in Mexico. The conspirators purchased and attempted to smuggle over 25 firearms. According to court records, many of those firearms were later recovered in Mexico, including a .50 caliber rifle which was recovered on December 12, 2020, after Mexican law enforcement authorities engaged a group of armed members of *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación* (CJNG), a Mexican transnational criminal organization.

Munoz's arrest was made in coordination with officials in Mexico and is the result of collaboration between the United States Marshals Service, ATF, and HSI.

If convicted of these offenses, Munoz faces a maximum of 20 years in prison and up to a \$1 million fine. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by a judge.

As noted above, ATF and HSI investigated the case. Assistant United States Attorneys Philip T. Kovoor and Christopher Ladwig will prosecute the case in the United States District Court in Green Bay.

An indictment is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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