

To: Weich, Ron (OLA)[Ron.Weich@usdoj.gov]
From: Gonzales, Mary (ATF)
Sent: Wed 9/28/2011 1:02:29 PM
Subject: FW: From LA times: Informant helped smuggle guns to Mexico, investigators say

Ron,

Hope you are well. Things have been interesting over here. **Unrelated**

Unrelated

Unrelated

Unrelated

Take care, m

Mary Gonzales | Congressional Liaison Specialist | Office of Legislative Affairs | Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives | p 202*648*7039 | c 202*731*2350 | f 202*648*9708 | mary.gonzales@atf.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Gonzales, Mary
Sent: Wednesday, September 28, 2011 8:12 AM
To: Burton, Faith (OLA) (JMD); Gaston, Molly (OLA) (JMD); Kellner, Kenneth E. (OLA) (JMD)
Cc: Wade, Jill C (OLA) (JMD)
Subject: Fw: From LA times: Informant helped smuggle guns to Mexico, investigators say

Could you please send us the letter referenced in the article? Thanks! M

----- Original Message -----

From: Gonzales, Mary
To: Dispenza, Mario V.; Murphy, Edward L.; Gonzales, Mary; Marshall, Teresa E.; Lynch, LaFondra N.; Hageman, John T.
Cc: Gant, Gregory K.
Sent: Wed Sep 28 06:40:46 2011
Subject: From LA times: Informant helped smuggle guns to Mexico, investigators say

The letter signals that the congressional investigation is looking beyond the ATF operation and into the possibility of a major breakdown in law enforcement cooperation on the border.

Informant helped smuggle guns to Mexico, investigators say
The FBI/DEA informant helped get the guns from the Fast and Furious operation over the border, congressional investigators say.
Weapons recovered from suspects accused of trafficking illegal firearms to Mexican drug cartels. (Joshua Lott, Reuters / September 28, 2011)

By Richard A. Serrano, Washington Bureau
September 27, 2011, 9:33 p.m.
Reporting from Washington--

An FBI/DEA confidential informant helped smuggle firearms from the ATF's Fast and Furious gun-trafficking surveillance operation to drug cartels in Mexico <http://www.latimes.com/topic/intl/mexico-PLGE00000613.topic> , according to evidence compiled by congressional investigators.

The investigators said the informant obtained the weapons from Manuel Celis-Acosta, considered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives <http://www.latimes.com/topic/politics/government/bureau-of-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-explosives-ORGOV0000253.topic> to be the "biggest fish" of 20 individuals indicted in Fast and Furious. At the same time the informant was receiving large amounts of "official law enforcement funds as payment" for his services, they said.

Congressional investigators believe the informant was working with U.S. law enforcement over a two-year period, beginning in early 2009, and often contacted DEA agents such as Jim Roberts, the resident agent-in-charge in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, to "pass on information to these agents about Mexican drug cartels."

The revelations were contained in a letter Tuesday from Rep. Darrel Issa (R-Vista), chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and Sen. Charles E. Grassley of Iowa, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, to Atty. Gen. Eric H. Holder Jr. They contend that had the FBI <http://www.latimes.com/topic/crime-law-justice/crimes/fbi-ORGOV000008.topic> and Drug Enforcement Administration told the ATF about the informant, Fast and Furious would have been shut down much earlier.

Holder has said he learned of Fast and Furious after it was shut down, and did not know that ATF agents allowed more than 2,000 weapons to be illegally purchased in the Phoenix area. Many turned up at violent crime scenes in Mexico; two were recovered in December after a U.S. Border Patrol agent was killed in Arizona.

The letter signals that the congressional investigation is looking beyond the ATF operation and into the possibility of a major breakdown in law enforcement cooperation on the border.

Fast and Furious ran for 15 months, from fall 2009 to last January, and culminated in indictments in Phoenix. Among them was Celis-Acosta. Documents show that when Fast and Furious was first proposed, the ATF targeted Celis-Acosta because they said he was "believed to be supplying firearms" to a drug cartel.

Congressional investigators have learned that the DEA was aware of Celis-Acosta's alleged drug trafficking activity as early as late 2009, just when Fast and Furious was getting underway, and that he was "providing hundreds of firearms to members of Mexican drug cartels." In fact, they knew Celis-Acosta allegedly was moving guns to Ciudad Juarez, south of El Paso, "but that he was uneasy about taking the guns across the border himself."

The FBI and DEA also knew that the informant, identified as "CI#1," was ordering

weapons from Celis-Acosta and smuggling them into Mexico. That informant, "apparently the financier for Celia-Acosta's firearms trafficking ring, later began cooperating with the FBI and may have received additional government payments as a confidential informant."

In one payment, the investigators learned, the U.S. government gave the informant \$3,500 for his services.

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