

Thank you, Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings and members of the committee for inviting me to speak today. I want to thank you for taking the time and effort to visit Mexico last month to get a boots-on-the-ground perspective. On behalf of Chargé d'Affaires John Feeley, I want to convey his deep appreciation for your interest in Mexico and U.S.-Mexico relations.

I am not here today to lay blame, point the finger or assign punishment. That will be for others to determine. I am simply here to discuss these events as I know them and let the committee and American people know what the ATF Mexico Country Office, referred to as the MCO, knew and when we knew it.

During my 22 year career with ATF, I proudly spent 15yrs as a street agent investigating violent crime and gun trafficking, and the last 7 supervising others doing the same. I am a recipient of the US Attorney General's Award for Excellence in Law Enforcement, 2 ATF Distinguished Service Medals and 2 Medals of Valor. I mention this not to boast but to illustrate my

recognized dedication to ATF and public service. I paid my dues.

I can say with AUTHORITY that “walking guns” is not a recognized investigative technique. These guns went to ruthless criminals. U.S. Law Enforcement and our Mexican partners will be recovering THESE guns for a long time to come as they continue to turn up at crime scenes in Mexico AND the United States. It INFURIATES me, that people -- including my law enforcement, diplomatic and military colleagues -- may be killed or injured with these weapons.

In my professional opinion, this investigative strategy was flawed. It was allowed to continue due to ineffective oversight in the Phoenix Field Division and possibly beyond. It's alleged that over 2,000 guns were trafficked in this investigation. To put that in context, upon information and belief, the US Army's 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment has approximately 2,500 rangers. That means that as a result of this investigation, the Sinaloa cartel may have received almost as many guns that are needed to arm the entire regiment. Out of these 2,000 weapons, 34 were .50-caliber

sniper rifles. That is approximately the number of sniper rifles a Marine infantry regiment takes into battle.

For the MCO, this case was one of the many ATF trafficking investigations with a US- Mexico nexus. I would like to inform this Committee and the American public that I believe what happened here was inexcusable-- and we in Mexico had NO part in it. We were aware of this investigation but were never aware of the policy to walk guns in this investigation. Since these questions have surfaced, I have become aware that critical details were deliberately kept from the MCO as well as ATF's Office of Strategic Intelligence. I have reason to believe that we were kept in the dark because the ATF leadership in Phoenix feared that we would tell our Mexican partners.

Reasonable people can disagree on investigative techniques, but there's NO room for "walking guns." This goes against everything we are taught at ATF, and I hope the Committee gets to the bottom of the allegations.

In Mexico, ATF has been doing great work, and I am proud of our efforts in combating violent crime with our Mexican counterparts. The whole point of the law enforcement mission in Mexico is to liaise with Mexican government officials and support their efforts to combat the transnational organized crime that plagues both our countries and threatens the security of our people. The allegations, stemming from this case, that a few ATF agents and supervisors deliberately allowed “guns to walk” have destroyed ATF’s credibility with our Mexican law enforcement partners and the Mexican public.

As this Committee knows, Mexico is plagued by terrible violence. Time and again my Mexican counterparts blame the United States for contributing to that violence. But, paramount to ATF, they blame us for an uncontrolled flow of weapons that end up in the hands of Mexican criminals. I do not endorse the view of the Mexican Government that American indifference is responsible for the violence and deaths. I make mention of it because it’s what I hear on a daily basis in my dealings with my Mexican colleagues. However, in this particular case, with these specific guns, I am unable to defend this operation.

This case has made life more difficult for me personally. Imagine my shame when my mother called on the telephone and said, "Please tell me you weren't involved in this." My mother is a very wise person. She may not know much about law enforcement, but she knows right from wrong. Even at a great distance, she could see that walking guns was a terrible risk.

The public's safety **MUST ALWAYS** come first.

Please remember: Regardless of good intentions, walking guns will **NEVER BE RIGHT**.

The ATF rank and file know this, and we have not been given a satisfactory explanation for what happened. So what I would like to say to my ATF colleagues is simply this: Stand tall. Hold your heads high. You work for a great agency. Look around, because there are heroes at ATF. We do not quit. We will not lie down. We will continue to honor our commitment to each other and to the public.

I thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions the committee may have of me.