

Thank you, Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings and members of the committee for inviting me to speak today.

I am saddened by the circumstances that bring me here today. As an employee of ATF, I know that this situation is an anomaly and not reflective of the good work that ATF does in the service of this Country. And I am hopeful that this process will shed light on what has occurred, so that we in ATF do not have to travel down this path again.

This year marks my 26th year of federal service and my 19th as an ATF Special Agent. During my years as an ATF Special Agent, I have been involved in hundreds of firearms trafficking investigations. These investigations date back to the early 1990s. I have seen firearms trafficked internationally from the United States to countries as diverse as the Netherlands, Canada, and Macau to name just a few. These international investigations were as unique as the places to where the guns were going. However one aspect shared by most of these investigations, was the fact that most international gun trafficking is being done in the interest of organized crime.

In late 2007th, I became the Border Liaison Officer for the Phoenix Field Division. My position allowed me to develop a working relationship with Mexican authorities and to travel into Mexico to examine guns or meet with officials. It was during this time that the struggle against the drug trafficking cartels was started by the Government of Mexican. Large scale gun battles and murder became a daily occurrence in Mexico.

To me and other agents it became apparent that the firepower being used was more than we had ever seen. As the level of firearms trafficking increased, we in the Phoenix Field Division realized that this was an arms race between the various

cartels, an arms race that could very well determine the future of Mexico and tremendously impact our own country's future.

Phoenix agents initiated many good investigations during this time. These investigations served to disrupt the trafficking of guns and prevented them from reaching Mexico. But the urgency displayed by the agents in stopping these gun traffickers, was not apparent in the prosecution of these cases, as we saw some of our best trafficking cases languish at the US Attorney's Office.

In an effort to do more against this tide of weapons; in the fall of 2009, I transferred to the newly opened ATF Field Office in Tijuana, Mexico. There I worked closely with ATF and other US Agents. I also traveled to some of the most troubled areas of Mexico.

In these contested areas I examined hundreds of firearms. Among these I examined some that can now be traced to the "Fast and Furious Investigation." The majority of these firearms had been seized from criminals engaged in drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion and other crimes. Having firsthand knowledge of the reality in Mexico, I was skeptical when the first whistle-blower came to this committee with allegations of hundreds maybe thousands of guns being allowed to "walk" into the Country of Mexico. I could not believe that someone in ATF would so callously let firearms wind up in the hands of criminals. But it appears that I was wrong, that hundreds and quite possibly thousands of guns have been allowed to reach the hands of organized crime. And that this activity has seemingly been approved by our own Justice Department and ATF management in the misguided hope of catching the "big fish". Having had enough experience with gun trafficking investigations, I can only imagine that once the DOJ OIG report was released, a report that was critical of ATF efforts in stopping gun trafficking; the emphasis changed to following the food chain up to the leaders. What the persons approving this debacle failed to realize is that the end does not justify the means.

These firearms that are now in the hands of people who have no regard for human life, pose a threat to all of us, a threat to which none of us is immune. I am especially concerned for the brave law enforcement officers and military in Mexico and here in the United States, I fear these firearms will continue to exact a terrible toll long after these hearings are over.

Finally, I have a request of this committee, that the serious problem of gun trafficking not be forgotten. I don't believe we need another toothless law. What we need is vigorous enforcement and prosecution of those that would traffic in firearms. A policy of "no tolerance" for straw purchasers and a change in the sentencing guidelines that would dictate mandatory sentences for these crimes would go a long way in curbing this criminal activity.

I Thank You