



Department of Justice

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RHODE ISLAND MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRING WITH STRAW PURCHASERS TO OBTAIN FIREARMS AND BEING A FELON IN POSSESSION OF A FIREARM

CONCORD – A Woonsocket, Rhode Island man pleaded guilty today in federal court in Concord to firearms-related charges, U.S. Attorney Jane E. Young announces.

Mario Marques, 25, pleaded guilty to conspiring to make false statements during the acquisition of firearms, and to being a felon in possession of a firearm. U.S. District Court Judge Joseph Laplante scheduled sentencing for March 14, 2024. Marques was indicted on July 20, 2023.

Between September 30 and November 20, 2021, Marques solicited another individual, a straw purchaser, to obtain firearms for him on five different occasions from multiple federally licensed firearms dealers in New Hampshire. Marques is a convicted felon and is legally prohibited from purchasing firearms himself. In obtaining the firearms, Marques selected the guns for the straw purchaser to buy for him in advance. In most cases, Marques accompanied the straw purchaser to the firearms dealerships, where the straw purchaser lied on the forms required to purchase the guns and said he was buying the guns for himself, when he was really buying them for Marques. Marques also pleaded to possessing a Springfield Armory Model XD, .40 caliber semiautomatic pistol, which was purchased in New Hampshire during the conspiracy. Law enforcement officers recovered the pistol on June 3, 2022, during investigation of another crime in Brockton, Massachusetts.

The charges provide for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes, which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) led the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Gingrande is prosecuting the case.

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations

that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

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