



Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

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CONTACT: PAO DARYL FIELDS
(210) 384-7440

NEW MEXICO MAN SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR LEAKING INFORMATION ABOUT CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

In Albuquerque, NM, today, 64-year-old Danny Burnett, a retired educator and husband of a former federal prosecutor, was sentenced to one year and one day in federal prison followed by one year of supervised release for leaking information regarding a criminal investigation to a target announced United States Attorney Robert Pitman.

In September 2013, a federal jury convicted Burnett of one count of giving notice of certain electronic surveillance and one count of making a false statement to federal investigators. Evidence presented during trial revealed that on February 17, 2011, Burnett met at an Albuquerque restaurant with long-time friend Columbus Police Chief Angelo Vega and advised him that federal investigators had a wiretap on Vega's phone. Burnett was also convicted of making a false statement to federal investigators on February 28, 2012, when he denied notifying Vega that he was the subject of a firearms trafficking investigation.

"By disclosing the existence of a wiretap to former Columbus Police Chief Angelo Vega, Mr. Burnett undermined a federal investigation of the trafficking of firearms into Mexico and put law enforcement agents in jeopardy. His friendship with Vega explains but does not excuse or justify compromising the investigation of such serious criminal activity. While Mr. Burnett was not a party to the underlying criminality, he committed a serious violation of law in his own right. This office and the Department of Justice will vigorously investigate and prosecute crimes against the integrity of the criminal justice system," stated United States Attorney Robert Pitman.

This case was investigated by agents with the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJOIG), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). Assistant United States Attorneys Steven Spitzer and Greg McDonald from the Western District of Texas prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

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