



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Former federal detention center employees indicted for bribery
and sexual abuse of a ward**

McALLEN – Six former employees of the East Hidalgo Detention Center (EHDC) are now in custody themselves on federal charges, announced U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Patrick.

Brenda Fuentes, 47, Weslaco, and Jhaziel Loreda, 32, Progreso, are set for their arraignments and detention hearings today at 2 and 4 p.m., respectively, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Juan F. Alanis. Jason Catalan, 36, Mercedes; Erasmo Loya, 54, La Villa; and Veronica Ortega, 43, McAllen, will have their hearings tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Domingo Hernandez, 25, Mercedes, made his initial appearance in New Mexico and is expected to appear in McAllen in the near future.

A McAllen grand jury returned the indictments Nov. 19. Authorities took them all into custody Friday, Nov. 22.

Catalan, Hernandez, Loreda, Loya and Ortega are charged with bribery, while Fuentes faces one count of sexual abuse of a ward.

According to the indictments, authorities discovered various forms of contraband in EHDC, a correctional facility under contract with the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS). Catalan, Hernandez, Loreda, Loya and Ortega allegedly accepted things of value in exchange for bringing contraband into the detention center.

The investigation further revealed Fuentes engaged in a sexual act with a federal inmate, according to the charges.

If convicted, they each face up to 15 years in federal prison as well as a possible \$250,000 maximum fine.

USMS, Department of Justice - Office of Inspector General and FBI conducted the joint investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patricia Cook Profit and Amy L. Greenbaum are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence.

A defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted through due process of law.

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