

For Immediate Release  
May 18, 2011

**ALBUQUERQUE MAN RECEIVES ONE-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE  
FOR TAMPERING WITH COURT-ORDERED DRUG TESTING**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court in Albuquerque, a United States District Judge sentenced Albuquerque resident **Brandon Ortiz**, 29, to a year and a day prison term to be followed by two years of supervised release for his conviction for tampering with a witness by misleading conduct. The court permitted Ortiz to voluntarily surrender himself to a federal correctional facility to be designated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons. Ortiz remains on release under pretrial supervision pending designation of the correctional facility.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Ortiz was arrested on July 19, 2010 on charges in a 15-count indictment alleging that he violated a federal law that prohibits obstructive conduct intended unlawfully to affect the presentation of evidence in federal proceedings. On February 14, 2011, Ortiz entered a guilty plea to count 1 of the indictment. Specifically, Ortiz pled guilty to helping a criminal defendant cheat on a urinalysis test and thus preventing the U.S. Probation Department from reporting a possible violation of supervision to the federal court.

According to the indictment, Ortiz's former employer, Relevancy, Inc., ("Relevancy") collected urine samples for drug testing from criminal defendants who were supervised by U.S. Probation and were required by court order to undergo drug testing as a condition of their supervision. Under its contract with U.S. Probation, Relevancy was required accurately and honestly to label the urine samples with the names of criminal defendants providing the samples and then to transfer the properly labeled samples to the U.S. Probation laboratory where the samples were analyzed. With the expectation that urine samples were properly labeled, U.S.

Probation routinely relied on the results of drug testing on the urine samples it received from Relevancy to prepare reports on criminal defendants that it submitted to federal judges, and the federal judges relied on the reports to determine whether criminal defendants had violated the conditions of their supervision.

The indictment charged Ortiz with twelve counts of helping criminal defendants cheat on urinalysis tests by discarding their urine samples and three counts of permitting criminal defendants to bring in substitute samples instead of providing their own urine samples for the drug tests. Ortiz entered his plea to count 1, charging him with permitting a criminal defendant to substitute a urine sample. As required by the plea agreement, the court dismissed counts 2 through 15 of the indictment at the conclusion of Ortiz's sentencing hearing.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Joel R. Meyers.

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