

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

RESERVE DEPUTY SHERIFF OF IMPERIAL COUNTY CHARGED WITH SMUGGLING ILLEGAL ALIENS IN TRUNK

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - April 18, 2013

El Centro – A reserve Imperial County Sheriff’s Deputy was charged today with smuggling illegal aliens in the trunk of her car as she drove through a checkpoint wearing her uniform and department-issued firearm.

Elizabeth Hernandez, a reserve Deputy Sheriff of Imperial County, and Edna Yanie Calderon, were arrested yesterday and charged with transportation of illegal aliens and aiding and abetting. Court records said Hernandez wore her uniform because she expected to be waived through the Highway 86 checkpoint by Border Patrol.

The complaint charges that on April 17, 2013, Calderon picked up three illegal aliens at a local fast food restaurant in Calexico, California. Border Patrol agents in the area became suspicious of the vehicle and began following at a distance.

The agents observed as Calderon drove the suspected illegal aliens to Hernandez’s home. Hernandez – a reserve deputy for three years - instructed the three aliens to hide in the trunk of her car, the complaint said. After the meeting at Hernandez’s home, Border Patrol had Hernandez and Calderon under surveillance.

After clearing the checkpoint, Hernandez drove to a nearby gas station, where she met with Calderon and transferred two of the three illegal aliens to Calderon's car.

According to the complaint, as Hernandez began to leave the gas station, Border Patrol agents initiated lights and sirens and stopped her vehicle. Border Patrol agents also approached Calderon's vehicle. The agents confirmed that the two individuals in Calderon's vehicle and the other individual in the trunk of Hernandez's vehicle were citizens and nationals of Mexico without immigration documents allowing them to remain, work, or reside in the United States legally. Hernandez and Calderon were then arrested.

The defendants were arraigned this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Peter C. Lewis. The government moved to detain both defendants based on risk of flight and danger to the community. A detention hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, April 23. A preliminary hearing was scheduled for May 2, 2013, at 1:30 p.m., before Judge Lewis.

DEFENDANTS

Magistrate Case No. 13MJ8293

Elizabeth Hernandez

Edna Yanie Calderon

SUMMARY OF CHARGES:

Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) – Transportation of Illegal Aliens
Maximum Penalties: 10 years of imprisonment and \$250,000 fine

AGENCY

United States Border Patrol-El Centro Sector

An indictment or complaint itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.