

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

FORMER RESERVE DEPUTY SHERIFF OF IMPERIAL COUNTY SENTENCED TO 30 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR SMUGGLING ILLEGAL ALIENS IN THE TRUNK OF HER CAR

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – September 13, 2013

San Diego – A former reserve Imperial County Sheriff’s Deputy was sentenced today to serve a term of 30 months in prison for smuggling illegal aliens, including a minor, in the trunk of her car as she drove through a Border Patrol checkpoint wearing her uniform and department-issued firearm.

While serving as a reserve Deputy Sheriff of Imperial County, Elizabeth Hernandez and her co-defendant, Edna Yanie Calderon, were arrested on April 17, 2013 for transporting illegal aliens. On June 25, 2013, Hernandez and Calderon pled guilty to transporting illegal aliens, and consented to the forfeiture of proceeds and assets associated with their crimes.

According to her plea agreement, Hernandez abused her position of public trust by using her Imperial County Sheriff Department’s uniform and loaded firearm to facilitate the transportation of illegal aliens through the Highway 86 checkpoint operated by Border Patrol. From at least October 2012 through April 17, 2013, Hernandez earned at least \$90,000 from transporting illegal aliens in the United States, the court records said.

In addition, Hernandez admitted that she used proceeds from alien smuggling to purchase several vehicles, including a 2013 Dodge Charger, a 2012 Polaris off-road recreational vehicle, and a 2008 GMC Sierra pickup truck. In addition, Hernandez consented to the forfeiture of approximately \$20,000 in cash that was found on her at the time of arrest and at her residence following a search warrant, which were proceeds from her alien smuggling.

U.S. District Court Judge Janis L. Sammartino found that Hernandez's use of her uniform and firearm made her conduct more egregious and distinguished her from Calderon. Judge Sammartino agreed that Hernandez's abuse of her position of public trust provided the smuggling organization with a "guaranteed method" to transport illegal aliens through the Border Patrol checkpoint. In addition to imposing a 30-month prison sentence, Judge Sammartino ordered forfeiture of several vehicles and \$20,000 in proceeds from alien smuggling. Following her prison sentence, Judge Sammartino placed Hernandez on three years of supervised release.

Hernandez was ordered to self-surrender to her designated prison facility by no later than November 5, 2013 at 12:00 p.m. A status hearing regarding Hernandez's self-surrender is scheduled for November 8, 2013 at 9:00 a.m, before Judge Sammartino. Hernandez's co-defendant, Calderon, is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Sammartino on October 4, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.

DEFENDANTS

Criminal Case No. 13CR1794-JLS

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