



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIAL
ARRESTED ON EXTORTION CHARGE**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge Manuel E. Mora and Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General Inspector in Charge James E. Smith announced that in El Paso this morning, an Immigration Enforcement Agent with Immigration and Customs Enforcement was charged by criminal complaint with trying to extort \$20,000 from an immigration detainee at the El Paso Service Processing Center.

On Friday, federal agents arrested 42-year-old Santiago Efrain Valle after he accepted \$20,000 from undercover officers. Valle was wearing his duty uniform at the time of his arrest. According to court documents, Valle agreed to accept \$20,000 in exchange for dismissing pending immigration charges against and changing the detainee risk classification of Francisco Gutierrez-Avila.

Upon conviction, Valle faces up to three years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security - Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Greg McDonald is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

A criminal complaint is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

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