

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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## ***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA***

***San Diego, California***

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***For Immediate Release***

### **NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY** - October 3, 2008

El Centro, CA - United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that Jesus Velasco Esparza, a Customs and Border Protection Officer assigned to the Calexico Port of Entry, was arraigned today in federal court in El Centro by United States Magistrate Judge Peter C. Lewis on a criminal complaint charging him with bribery and narcotics-related violations.

The complaint alleges that, since at least August 2008, Esparza knowingly and intentionally attempted to aid and abet the importation of controlled substances, including at least 1 kilogram of a mixture containing a detectable amount of heroin and at least 5 kilograms of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine into the United States. The complaint also alleges that Esparza was paid a fee, by someone Esparza believed to be a narcotics trafficker, to access the Treasury Enforcement Communications System (TECS) database in an unofficial capacity to check the license plates of vehicles that would be used to smuggle drugs into the United States. The complaint further alleges that Esparza demanded and received bribe money in exchange for committing the foregoing alleged acts.

Agents from the Imperial County Public Corruption Task Force arrested Esparza on October 2, 2008;

Esparza is currently in custody.

Esparza is scheduled to be in court next on October 8, 2008, before Magistrate Judge Peter C. Lewis for a detention hearing.

**DEFENDANT**

**Case Number: 08mj8918**

Jesus Velasco Esparza

**SUMMARY OF CHARGES**

Count 1: Title 18, United States Code, Sections 201(b)(2)(C) - Bribery  
Penalties: Maximum: 15 years in custody  
Maximum: \$250,000 fine  
At least three years supervised release

Count 2 - 4: Title 21, United States Code, Sections 952, 960 and 963 – Attempt to Aid and Abet  
Importation of Controlled Substances  
Penalties: Minimum: 10 years in custody; Maximum: Life  
Maximum: \$4 million fine  
At least five years supervised release

Count 5: Title 18, United States Code, Section 1030(a)(2)(B) and (c)(2) (B)(I) - Fraud and Related  
Activity in Connection with Computers  
Penalties: Maximum: Five years in custody  
Maximum: \$250,000 Fine  
At least three years supervised release

**INVESTIGATING AGENCIES**

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General  
Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Office of Professional Responsibility

**A complaint itself is not evidence that the defendant committed the crimes charged. The defendant is presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.**