



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

Smugglers & Traffickers

“Madam” That Imported Mexican Teens to Work as Prostitutes Pleads Guilty: On July 1, 2004, Maria de Jesus Valle-Maldonado, a Mexican national who was the “madam” of a Los Angeles brothel where about a dozen young women and girls – including a 14 and 15-year-old -- worked as prostitutes, pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy to import aliens for the purpose of prostitution and other immigration violations. Valle-Maldonado admitted that she recruited young women in Mexico and paid for them to be smuggled to her Los Angeles brothel to work as prostitutes. She is the fourth person to be convicted of federal charges resulting from an ICE investigation that uncovered the Los Angeles brothel.

One-Year-Old Girl Held Ransom by Human Smugglers: On March 10, 2004, human smugglers on the Arizona border assaulted a Mexican female and kidnapped her one-year-old daughter. ICE agents located the father of the child in Ohio and found that the kidnappers were demanding \$500 ransom from him for her release. Undercover ICE agents worked with the father to arrange a meeting with the kidnappers in Arizona. ICE agents arrested two individuals at the meeting, one of who led them to a home in Douglas, Arizona, where the baby was found and rescued. Another individual was arrested at the Douglas location.

Guilty Pleas in Child Trafficking Case: On October 10, 2003, defendant Maricela Martinez-Uresti pleaded guilty to sex trafficking of children and human smuggling violations. The co-defendant, Violeta Juanita De Hoyos-Hernandez, pleaded guilty to human smuggling violations. The investigation by ICE agents in San Antonio, Texas, revealed that Martinez-Uresti executed employment contracts with minor females and their parents, falsely representing that the minors would work in her restaurant to repay the \$1,500 smuggling fee. Once the girls reached the United States, they were forced against their will to work as prostitutes.

Women Sentenced for Smuggling Undocumented Teens to Work as Prostitutes: On August 7, 2003, two female Mexican nationals were sentenced to 210 months in prison in Newark, New Jersey, for luring four teenaged Mexican girls to the United States and holding them captive as prostitutes in a brothel in Plainfield, N.J. The sentences were the first to be handed down under the Trafficking and Victims Protection Act, which was enacted in 2000. The two women sentenced were among a total of six defendants who have pleaded guilty as a result of the ICE investigation into the New Jersey-based human trafficking ring.