

PRESS RELEASE

Former religious services assistant admits to smuggling contraband into federal prison

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Texas

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – A 33-year-old Beeville woman has entered a guilty plea to smuggling contraband into a federal prison, announced U.S. Attorney Nicholas J. Ganjei.

Ashley Priscilla Garza worked as a religious services assistant with the Federal Correctional Institution in Three Rivers.

As part of her plea, Garza admitted she used her access to the prison to smuggle contraband to an inmate in 2022 and 2023. The items included cigarettes, an MP3 player and papers laced with synthetic opioids and other drugs.

In return, she received 13 payments totaling approximately \$11,400. She was terminated following the discovery of the smuggling scheme.

U.S. District Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos will impose sentencing Aug. 12. At that time, Garza will face up to 15 years in federal prison and a possible fine of up to \$250,000.

Garza was permitted to remain on bond pending that hearing.

The Department of Justice-Office of Inspector General conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Chu and Robert Thorpe are prosecuting the case.