



# NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney  
Eastern District of Texas

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

DATE: August 10, 2004

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## **BANK EMPLOYEE FACES FRAUD CHARGES**

(Texarkana, TX) A 31-year old Mt. Pleasant man was arraigned today on charges of federal bank fraud in the Eastern District of Texas. **SERGIO RAMIREZ RODRIGUEZ** appeared before United States Magistrate Judge Caroline M. Craven for arraignment. Rodriguez was indicted by a federal grand jury on August 3, 2004, on charges of charged with approving loans to fictitious persons and keeping the proceeds for his personal use.

Rodriguez, a citizen of Mexico, was hired by Guarantee Bank of Mt. Pleasant and brought to the United States on a work visa to serve the Bank's Spanish speaking customers. He is charged with 14 counts of bank fraud totaling more than \$116,000.00. The indictment alleges that on 14 occasions between October 2002, and May 2004, Rodriguez received and approved loan applications he knew contained false and misleading information regarding the identity of loan recipients.

Rodriguez entered a plea of not guilty to all 14 counts. The Government has asked the Court to deny bond to Rodriguez because he is not an American citizen and poses a risk of flight to avoid prosecution in this case. A detention hearing has been scheduled for Thursday, August 12, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. The case is set for trial in October, 2004.

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If convicted, Rodriguez could face a maximum of thirty years in prison and a \$1 million fine. It is important to note, that an indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of either guilt or innocence.

The case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Tom Ferraro of Texarkana is prosecuting the case.

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