

Woman Convicted for Tampering with Evidence

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On Tuesday July 19, 2017, a Victoria County jury convicted Celestina Lynn Garcia of Tampering with Evidence, a 3rd Degree Felony with a punishment range of 2-10 years, and or a maximum fine of \$10,000.00. The state of Texas and County of Victoria was represented by ACDA Alton James III, and First Assistant Brendan Guy. During the State's case in chief, it was revealed that on April 24, 2016 the Defendant was arrested with her sister for possession of marijuana, a Class B misdemeanor. While in route to the Victoria County Jail for processing, the Defendant removed a small baggie of marijuana from her sister's vagina, and subsequently hid the marijuana inside the police officer's vehicle. Victoria Police Department Officer Andres Garcia witnessed the incident on his dash cam and testified to the Defendant's actions. During the guilt and innocence portion of the trial, the Defendant testified in her own defense, and it was revealed that she had 18 prior misdemeanor convictions in various counties throughout the state of Texas including Theft, Assault, Possession of drugs, and Burglary. During closing remarks, The State argued that the dash-cam footage clearly depicted the Defendant hiding the marijuana, and that this Defendant is no stranger to violating the law, having 18 previous convictions. After the summation of evidence, the Jury retired to the Jury deliberation room, and returned with a unanimous verdict of guilty. During Punishment, the Jury unanimously sentenced the Defendant to 8 years in jail and a fine of \$10,000.00.

This is ACDA James' 16th trial, and first Felony trial. After the jury's verdict, he said "The Jury came to the correct verdict. No, this wasn't a particularly egregious offense as far as crimes go, but when the jury learned that Ms. Garcia had 18 prior convictions, they clearly felt that a more serious punishment was warranted."

