

# Starr County Sheriff Rene “Orta” Fuentes


SEPTEMBER 19, 2023



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">TABLE OF CONTENTS</a> .....         | 1 |
| <a href="#">TOP HITS</a> .....                  | 3 |
| <a href="#">[REDACTED]</a> .....                | 3 |
| <a href="#">FAMILY'S CRIMINAL HISTORY</a> ..... | 4 |



|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <u>LATE PAYMENT OF PROPERTY TAXES</u> .....          | 4         |
| <b><u>PUBLIC RECORDS</u></b> .....                   | <b>5</b>  |
| <u>DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES</u> .....               | 5         |
| <u>POLITICAL RECORDS</u> .....                       | 6         |
| <b><u>RECORD AS STARR COUNTY SHERIFF</u></b> .....   | <b>7</b>  |
| <u>TENURE</u> .....                                  | 7         |
| <u>NEPOTISM</u> .....                                | 7         |
| <u>SERVICE UNDER DISGRACED FORMER SHERIFFS</u> ..... | 8         |
| <u>STAFF</u> <u>UNDER FUENTES</u> .....              | 10        |
| <u>MISMANAGEMENT</u> .....                           | 14        |
| <b><u>FAMILY'S LEGAL ISSUES</u></b> .....            | <b>16</b> |
| <u>RENE FUENTES JR.</u> .....                        | 16        |
| <u>ROBERTO JUAN "ROBBY" FUENTES</u> .....            | 17        |

# TOP HITS

- Prior to becoming Starr County Sheriff in October 2008, Fuentes had served in the Sheriff's office since the early 1980s. (*The Monitor*, 10/14/08; *The Brownsville Herald*, 11/17/08)
  - As Starr County Sheriff, Fuentes' salary has increased by 8.2 percent since 2016, from \$99,196 to \$107,340. (2022-2023 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/22; 2017-2018 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/26/17)
- There are at least two members of Fuentes' family on the Starr County Sheriff's payroll. Chief Deputy Larry Fuentes and Captain Lenard Fuentes are top administrators in Fuentes' office. Larry Fuentes earns an annual salary of \$62,540 and Lenard Fuentes a salary of \$50,320. ([Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23; 2022-2023 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/22)
- Prior to being named Sheriff, Fuentes served under two corrupt Starr County Sheriff's Eugenio "Gene" Falcon and Reymundo Guerra, who were both sentenced to prison. Fuentes was second-in-command under Guerra. (*The Monitor*, 4/27/07)
  - In 1998, Eugenio "Gene" Falcon resigned as Starr County Sheriff after he pleaded guilty to a federal bribery conspiracy charge. He was sentenced to two years in prison. (*The Monitor*, 9/4/08; *The Dallas Morning News*, 3/5/98; [Los Angeles Times](#), 4/3/09)
  - In 2008, then-Starr County Sheriff Reymundo Guerra resigned after he was arrested on charges of drug trafficking and endangering law enforcement by sharing the names of confidential informants with the Mexican Gulf cartel. Guerra faced life in prison but was sentenced to 64 months in prison and four years of supervised release. (*The Monitor*, 10/14/08; *The Associated Press*, 10/18/08; [The Associated Press](#), 8/27/09; *The Associated Press*, 8/10/09; *The Monitor*, 4/27/07)
- Since becoming Starr County Sheriff in 2008, there have been numerous instances of \_\_\_\_\_ by staff in Fuentes office.
  - In October 2016, investigator Osdy Luna Jr. turned himself in to authorities after he was accused of forcibly obtaining a search warrant. Luna was terminated earlier in the year for missing funds in the Sheriff's office. He was also a person of interest in a double-homicide investigation after his wife and her friend were shot to death. (*The Monitor*, 10/5/16; *The Brownsville Herald*, 5/16/16)
  - In 2014, deputy Amy Reyes was arrested by U.S. Border Patrol agents after they seized 24 marijuana bundles from a car she was riding in with her brother. ([Breitbart](#), 11/24/14)
  - In 2013, Fuentes' Captain was charged for accepting thousands of bribes to help protect drug dealers and their smuggling routes. ([Action 4 News](#), 9/25/13; *The Monitor*, 4/11/13)
  - In 2012, two of Fuentes' deputies, Jason Munsell and Nazario Solis were indicted on bribery, extortion and gun charges. They had accepted bribes to protect an illegal gambling operation. Solis, who was working for Mexico's Gulf Cartel, was charged with intent to distribute marijuana and trading guns for cocaine. (*The Monitor*, 7/19/12; [Breitbart](#), 11/24/14)
  - In 2011, an investigator in Fuentes' office was suspended for poaching deer in a county vehicle. (*The Monitor*, 11/29/11)
  - In October 2020, several employees, including a high-ranking official in Fuentes' office were fired over a security breach at the Starr County jail. (*The Monitor*, 11/17/20)

## FAMILY'S CRIMINAL HISTORY

## LATE PAYMENT OF PROPERTY TAXES

- According to Starr County Records, Fuentes has been late paying his property taxes at least six times since 1998. He was assessed \$187.22 in penalty and interest for the late payment of his taxes. ([Starr County Tax Assessor-Collector](#), Accessed 9/12/23)

# PUBLIC RECORDS

## DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES

**Since 1998, Fuentes Has Been Late On His Property Taxes During At Least Six Years**

**Fuentes Is The Owner Of**

(Account No. 6856, [Starr County Tax Assessor-Collector](#),

Accessed 9/12/23)

**STARR COUNTY TAX OFFICE 2022 TAX STATEMENT**

**THIS IS YOUR TAX BILL**

Pay to: Starr County Tax Office  
100 N. FM 3167 Suite 201  
Rio Grande City TX 78582  
(956) 716-4800

**NO CASH PAYMENTS**

Pay online at:  
<https://starr.go2gov.net>

Ameida Salinas, Tax Assessor-Collector

Date: 12/01/2022  
P.I.D.: 0006856

BILL#: 020612

|||||

FUENTES RENE  
FUENTES

Pay only ONE of the amounts below  
Discounts or P & I have been applied.

| IF PAID BY |          | AMOUNT DUE |
|------------|----------|------------|
| DECEMBER   | 31, 2022 | 654.85     |
| JANUARY    | 31, 2023 | 660.51     |
| FEBRUARY   | 28, 2023 | 706.75     |
| MARCH      | 31, 2023 | 719.94     |
| APRIL      | 30, 2023 | 733.17     |
| MAY        | 31, 2023 | 746.38     |
| JUNE       | 30, 2023 | 759.59     |
| JULY       | 31, 2023 | 896.32     |

**According To Starr County Property Records, Fuentes Purchased The Property On July 16, 1993.** (Warranty Deed, Document No. 1003-166316, [Starr County Clerk](#), Filed 7/16/93)

**For Tax Years 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, And 2005, Fuentes Was Late Paying His Property Taxes And Was Assessed \$187.22 In Penalty And Interest.** (Account No. 6856, [Starr County Tax Assessor-Collector](#), Accessed 9/12/23)

| Account No. | Owner         | Year | Base Tax | Penalty/Interest | Attorney Fees | Total    |
|-------------|---------------|------|----------|------------------|---------------|----------|
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2022 | \$660.51 | (\$11.31)        | \$0.00        | \$649.20 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2021 | \$690.50 | (\$17.49)        | \$0.00        | \$673.01 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2020 | \$677.47 | (\$11.47)        | \$0.00        | \$666.00 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2019 | \$616.00 | (\$5.22)         | \$0.00        | \$610.78 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2018 | \$563.19 | (\$4.75)         | \$0.00        | \$558.44 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2017 | \$514.72 | (\$4.33)         | \$0.00        | \$510.39 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2016 | \$518.60 | (\$4.36)         | \$0.00        | \$514.24 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2015 | \$506.68 | (\$8.47)         | \$0.00        | \$498.21 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2014 | \$513.19 | (\$4.30)         | \$0.00        | \$508.89 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2013 | \$494.80 | (\$12.68)        | \$0.00        | \$482.12 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2012 | \$493.49 | (\$4.21)         | \$0.00        | \$489.28 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2011 | \$454.97 | (\$3.83)         | \$0.00        | \$451.14 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2010 | \$440.59 | (\$3.69)         | \$0.00        | \$436.90 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2009 | \$436.02 | (\$3.72)         | \$0.00        | \$432.30 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2008 | \$438.89 | (\$3.76)         | \$0.00        | \$435.13 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2007 | \$439.01 | (\$7.48)         | \$0.00        | \$431.53 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2006 | \$375.08 | (\$6.19)         | \$0.00        | \$368.89 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2005 | \$371.35 | \$48.28          | \$0.00        | \$419.63 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2004 | \$364.96 | (\$5.93)         | \$0.00        | \$359.03 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2003 | \$380.50 | \$26.63          | \$0.00        | \$407.13 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2002 | \$360.50 | \$0.00           | \$0.00        | \$360.50 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2001 | \$285.04 | \$25.65          | \$0.00        | \$310.69 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 2000 | \$329.11 | \$36.21          | \$0.00        | \$365.32 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 1999 | \$329.77 | \$23.10          | \$0.00        | \$352.87 |
| 6856        | Fuentes, Rene | 1998 | \$248.69 | \$27.35          | \$0.00        | \$276.04 |

# POLITICAL RECORDS

## Contributions

**NOTE:** *Fuentes has never contributed to a federal political candidate or committee.* (Donor Search, FEC, Accessed 9/12/23)

**On December 1, 2008, Fuentes Contributed \$200 To Democratic State House Rep. Ryan A. Guillen.** (Donor Search, [Texas Ethics Commission](#), Accessed 7/11/22)

## Voter Registration

**According To Nexis Public Records, Fuentes Is A Registered Democrat Voter In Starr County, Texas.** (Nexis Public Records, Accessed 9/12/23)

|                                 |       |                                 |                          |    |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1.                              | Voter | Active                          | Registration: 10/07/1980 | TX |
| <b>Personal Information</b>     |       | <b>Voter Information</b>        |                          |    |
| • Name: Fuentes, Rene Florencio |       | • Registration Date: 10/07/1980 |                          |    |
|                                 |       | • Last Vote Date: 03/01/2022    |                          |    |
|                                 |       | • Race: HISPANIC                |                          |    |
|                                 |       | • Party: DEMOCRAT               |                          |    |
|                                 |       | • Active or Inactive: ACTIVE    |                          |    |
| • DOB: 10/1960                  |       |                                 |                          |    |
| • Age Range: 55-64              |       |                                 |                          |    |
| • Gender: Male                  |       |                                 |                          |    |

# RECORD AS STARR COUNTY SHERIFF

## TENURE

*Fuentes Has Been In The Starr County Sheriff's Office For More Than 40 Years*

**Fuentes Has Worked In The Sheriff's Office For More Than 40 Years**

**In 2008, The Brownsville Herald Reported That Fuentes Had Been In The Starr County Sheriff's Department For 28 Years.** "Fuentes has served in the department for 28 years and been chief deputy for the last 10, since Guerra was appointed sheriff." (Sara Perkins, "Fuentes Officially Starr's Top Cop," *The Brownsville Herald*, 11/17/08)

**Since 2016, Fuentes' Sheriff's Salary Has Increased By 8.2 Percent**

**In Budget Year 2022-2023, Fuentes Earned \$107,340.** (2022-2023 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/22; 2021-2022 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/21; 2020-2021 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/17/20; 2019-2020 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/27/19; 2017-2018 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/26/17)

**Since The 2016-2017 Budget Year, Fuentes' Salary Has Increased From \$99,196 To \$107,340, An 8.2**

**Percent Increase.** (2022-2023 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/22; 2021-2022 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/21; 2020-2021 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/17/20; 2019-2020 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/27/19; 2017-2018 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/26/17)

| Budget Year | Annual Salary | Supplemental Salary | Total Salary |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 2022-2023   | \$107,340     | \$0.00              | \$107,340    |
| 2021-2022   | \$103,343     | \$0.00              | \$103,343    |
| 2020-2021   | \$99,343      | \$0.00              | \$99,343     |
| 2019-2020   | \$99,343      | \$0.00              | \$99,343     |
| 2018-2019   | \$95,522      | \$0.00              | \$95,522     |
| 2017-2018   | \$79,454      | \$16,068            | \$95,522     |
| 2016-2017   | \$82,510      | \$16,686            | \$99,196     |

## NEPOTISM

**At Least Two Members Of Fuentes' Family Are On The Sheriff's Office Payroll**

**Two Fuentes Family Members, Chief Deputy Larry Fuentes And Capt. Lenard Fuentes Are Top Administrators In Fuentes' Sheriff's Office.** "Rene Fuentes Jr. is part of a prominent family that runs the Starr County Sheriff's Office. His father, Rene 'Orta' Fuentes Sr., is the sheriff. Two other members of the family, Chief Deputy Larry Fuentes and Capt. Lenard Fuentes, are top administrators." (Dave Hendricks, "Starr County Sheriff's Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge," [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**According To Starr County's Most Recent Budget, Fuentes' Chief Deputy Earns An Annual Salary Of \$62,540 And His Captain Earns An Annual Salary Of \$50,320.** (2022-2023 Budget, [Starr County](#), Filed 9/13/22)

| SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT              | APPROVED BUDGET 2020-2021 | APPROVED BUDGET 2021 - 2022 | REQUESTED BY DEPARTMENT | PROPOSED BY BUDGET OFFICER | APPROVED 2022 - 2023 BUDGET |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Salary of Official                | 99,343.00                 | 103,343.00                  |                         | 107,340.00                 | 107,340.00                  |
| Suppl. Salary of Official         |                           |                             |                         |                            |                             |
| Salary of Chief Deputy            | 56,725.00                 | 59,560.00                   |                         | 62,540.00                  | 62,540.00                   |
| Salary of Deputies (19 positions) | 709,040.00                | 744,490.00                  |                         | 781,710.00                 | 781,710.00                  |
| Salary of Secretary               | 29,400.00                 | 30,900.00                   |                         | 32,450.00                  | 32,450.00                   |
| Salary of Clerk                   | 27,825.00                 | 29,330.00                   |                         | 30,830.00                  | 30,830.00                   |
| Salary of TAC                     |                           |                             |                         | 41,140.00                  | 41,140.00                   |
| Salary of Dispatchers (7)         | 201,970.00                | 212,470.00                  |                         | 223,090.00                 | 223,090.00                  |
| Salary of Investigators (8)       | 286,148.00                | 300,450.00                  |                         | 315,470.00                 | 315,470.00                  |
| Salary of Lieutenant              | 42,863.00                 | 45,010.00                   |                         | 47,260.00                  | 47,260.00                   |
| Salary of Major                   | 48,341.00                 | 50,760.00                   |                         | 53,300.00                  | 53,300.00                   |
| Salary of Captain                 | 45,641.00                 | 47,920.00                   |                         | 50,320.00                  | 50,320.00                   |
| Salary of Sergeants               | 163,512.00                | 171,690.00                  |                         | 180,270.00                 | 180,270.00                  |
| Salary of Corporals               |                           |                             |                         |                            |                             |
| Salary of Civil Process           | 39,323.00                 | 41,290.00                   |                         | 43,350.00                  | 43,350.00                   |
| Salary of Warrants                | 39,342.00                 | 41,310.00                   |                         | 43,350.00                  | 43,350.00                   |
| Salary of Courthouse Deputies     | 74,673.00                 | 78,410.00                   |                         | 81,410.00                  | 81,410.00                   |
| Salary of Annex Deputy            |                           |                             |                         | 41,140.00                  | 41,140.00                   |
| Salary of Sex Assault Inv         | 40,879.00                 | 42,920.00                   |                         | 45,070.00                  | 45,070.00                   |
| Salary of Task Force Officer      | 39,667.00                 | 41,650.00                   |                         | 43,730.00                  | 43,730.00                   |
| Custodian                         | 25,500.00                 | 27,000.00                   |                         | 28,500.00                  | 28,500.00                   |
| Sal of P-T Dispatcher             | 22,910.00                 | 24,410.00                   |                         | 26,910.00                  | 26,910.00                   |
| <b>TOTAL WAGES</b>                | <b>\$ 1,993,102.00</b>    | <b>\$ 2,082,913.00</b>      | <b>\$ -</b>             | <b>\$ 2,279,180.00</b>     | <b>\$ 2,279,180.00</b>      |

## SERVICE UNDER DISGRACED FORMER SHERIFFS

### Served Under Disgraced Starr County Sheriffs

#### Fuentes Has Worked In The Sheriff's Office For More Than 40 Years

**In 2008, The Brownsville Herald Reported That Fuentes Had Been In The Starr County Sheriff's Department For 28 Years.** "Fuentes has served in the department for 28 years and been chief deputy for the last 10, since Guerra was appointed sheriff." (Sara Perkins, "Fuentes Officially Starr's Top Cop," *The Brownsville Herald*, 11/17/08)

#### Fuentes Worked Under Eugenio "Gene" Falcon, The Disgraced Starr County Sheriff Who Had Served Two Years In Prison For Bail Bond Kickbacks Was Vera's Administrative Assistant

**In 1998, Eugenio "Gene" Falcon Resigned As Starr County Sheriff And Served Two Years In Prison** "Starr County commissioners appointed Guerra to office in 1998 after a disgraced Sheriff Eugenio 'Gene' Falcon resigned after pleading guilty to a bail bond kickback scheme. Falcon was sentenced to two years in prison and now works for Starr County Judge Eloy Vera." (Sean Gaffney, "FBI Searches Starr County Sheriff's Office, House," *The Monitor*, 9/4/08)

**In March 1998, Falcon Pleaded Guilty To A Federal Bribery Conspiracy Charge.** "Starr County's politically powerful and controversial sheriff, Eugenio 'Gene' Falcon, pleaded guilty Wednesday to a federal bribery conspiracy charge, just days before he was to go on trial in Brownsville. The news sent shock waves through the rugged border county where Sheriff Falcon has served as the top law enforcement officer since 1981." (David McLemore, "Valley Sheriff Pleads Guilty In Kickback Case," *The Dallas Morning News*, 3/5/98)

**In 1998, Falcon Admitted To Accepting Thousands Of Dollars In Payoffs In Exchange To Referring Jail Inmates To A Certain Bail Bond Agency.** "Sheriff Falcon, 44, accompanied by his attorney, Roberto Yzaguirre of McAllen, made a brief appearance about 3 p.m. before U.S. District Judge Filemon Vela in Brownsville. There, he admitted accepting thousands of dollars in payoffs from bondsman Homero Arturo Longoria in Rio Grande City in exchange for referring jail inmates to Mr. Longoria's bail bond agency." (David McLemore, "Valley Sheriff Pleads Guilty In Kickback Case," *The Dallas Morning News*, 3/5/98)

- **Federal Prosecutors Recommended Falcon Receive Five Years In Prison And A \$250,000 Fine.** "Federal prosecutors dropped 14 counts of bribery and recommended that Sheriff Falcon receive five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, according to James DeAtley, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Texas." (David McLemore, "Valley Sheriff Pleads Guilty In Kickback Case," *The Dallas Morning News*, 3/5/98)

**Falcon Ended Up Serving About Two Years For Taking Bribes.** "Guerra's predecessor, Sheriff Eugenio 'Gene' Falcon Jr., served just under two years in prison for taking bribes to refer inmates to a bail bondsman who was an FBI informant. Falcon now is an administrative assistant to Judge Vera. 'I was raked over the coals pretty



good for that,' Vera said. 'But we all deserve a second chance.'" (Scott Kraft, "On The Borderline Of Good And Evil," [Los Angeles Times](#), 4/3/09)

### **Fuentes Was Second In Command Of The Starr County Sheriff's Office Under Then-Sheriff Reymundo Guerra, Who Was Arrested For Drug Trafficking And Outing Confidential Informants To The Mexican Gulf Cartel**

**In 2007, Fuentes Was "Chief Deputy And Second In Charge Of The Starr County Sheriff's Office."** "Fuentes is the son of Rene Fuentes Sr., chief deputy and second in charge of the Starr County Sheriff's Office." (Michael Barnett, "ATF Agents Arrest Former Deputy," *The Monitor*, 4/27/07)

**In October 2008, Fuentes Was Appointed Acting Sheriff After Guerra Was Arrested For Various Serious Crimes.** "A federal grand jury indicted Starr County Sheriff Rey Guerra on drug charges, officials announced today. Guerra is named as a defendant in a 19-count indictment handed down Wednesday. FBI agents arrested Guerra at his office in Rio Grande City. He is expected to appear later today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Dorina Ramos in McAllen. Prosecutors will seek to keep Guerra behind bars pending a hearing on its request to detain him without bond before his trial. Starr County Judge Eloy Vera said Tuesday that Guerra's chief deputy, Rene Fuentes, would be appointed acting sheriff 'until further notice.'" ("Starr County Sheriff Indicted On Drug Charges," *The Monitor*, 10/14/08)

- **In November 2008, The Starr County Commission Approved Fuentes To Be County Sheriff.** "Nearly a month after Reymundo 'Rey' Guerra resigned the position by letter from federal custody, county commissioners decided to give Chief Deputy Rene Fuentes the top job. County Judge Eloy Vera said the move came earlier than expected partially to quell the rampant rumors spreading about the department and about who might be picked to lead it. Speculation at one point or another touched upon nearly every licensed peace officer between Zapata and Sullivan City." (Sara Perkins, "Fuentes Officially Starr's Top Cop," *The Brownsville Herald*, 11/17/08)

**In October 2008, Starr County Sheriff Reymundo Guerra Was Arrested On Drug Trafficking Charges And Endangering Law Enforcement Agents By Sharing Names Of Confidential Informants To The Mexican Gulf Cartel.** "A South Texas sheriff arrested this week on drug trafficking charges made it easier for the Mexican Gulf Cartel to operate in his county and endangered fellow law enforcement agents by sharing names of confidential informants, a federal prosecutor said Friday. FBI agents arrested Starr County Sheriff Reymundo Guerra on Tuesday at his office in Rio Grande City. Guerra faces three counts of a sprawling 19-count indictment implicating him and 14 others in a drug smuggling conspiracy." ("S. Texas Sheriff Pleads Not Guilty," *The Associated Press*, 10/18/08)

**Guerra Had Initially Pleaded Not Guilty.** "At his arraignment Friday, Guerra pleaded not guilty." ("S. Texas Sheriff Pleads Not Guilty," *The Associated Press*, 10/18/08)

**But In May 2009, Guerra Pleaded Guilty To A Drug Trafficking Charge And Accepting Money From Mexico's Gulf Cartel In Exchange For Providing Information.** "In May, Guerra pleaded guilty to a drug trafficking charge for accepting thousands of dollars in exchange for passing information to a former Mexican law enforcement contact who he knew was working for Mexico's Gulf Cartel. Guerra once even gave false documents to one of his own deputies to close a drug trafficking investigation, prosecutors said." (Martha Mendoza and Christopher Sherman, 'Along Mexican Border Snares U.S. Agents,' *The Associated Press*, 8/10/09)

**Guerra Faced Life In Prison.** "Guerra could face up to life in prison when he is sentenced later this month." (Martha Mendoza and Christopher Sherman, 'Along Mexican Border Snares U.S. Agents,' *The Associated Press*, 8/10/09)

**But Guerra Was Sentenced To 64 Months In Prison And Four Years Of Supervised Release.** "A former sheriff was sentenced to more than five years in federal prison for helping Mexican smugglers move drugs through his county on the border in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribes. Judge Randy Crane of Federal District Court

sentenced Reymundo Guerra, a former Starr County sheriff, to 64 months in prison and four years of supervised release. Mr. Guerra pleaded guilty in May to conspiring to distribute narcotics.” (“Former Sheriff Is Sentenced,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/27/09)

## STAFF UNDER FUENTES

### **In 2016, Osdy Luna Jr., An Investigator With The Starr County Sheriff’s Office, Was Terminated After He Was Questioned Over Missing Money In The Sheriff’s Office; Luna Had Also Been A Person Of Interest In A Double-Homicide**

**In October 2016, Osdy Luna Jr. And Cynthia Ramirez, Two Former Investigators With The Starr County Sheriff’s Office, Turned Themselves In After They Were Accused Of Forcibly Obtaining A Search Warrant.** “Two former investigators with the Starr County Sheriff’s Office turned themselves in Tuesday evening on charges of official oppression, according to Starr County Attorney Victor Canales. Osdy Luna Jr. and Cynthia Ramirez were charged in connection with an incident in September 2015 in which Luna and Ramirez are accused of forcibly obtaining a search warrant at a home in the Alto Bonito area.” (Berenice Garcia, “Two Former Starr County Investigators Arrested,” *The Monitor*, 10/5/16)

- **Luna Had Worked In The Sheriff’s Office From August 2011 To May 2016.** “Luna worked with the sheriff’s office from August 2011 until he was terminated in May, and Ramirez, who started with the sheriff’s office in August 2012, left in July to work with Texas Rural Legal Aid.” (Berenice Garcia, “Two Former Starr County Investigators Arrested,” *The Monitor*, 10/5/16)

### **The Texas Rangers Had Also Considered Luna As A Person Of Interest In A Homicide Investigation.**

“Warrants for their arrests would have been executed sooner, but they were delayed after the slaying of Oneida Alanis Balderas Garza and Luna’s wife, Lourdes Elizondo. The bodies of the two women, both employees of the Rio Grande City school district, were discovered one morning in late March, their hands bound and each with a gunshot wound to the head. Luna was considered a person of interest by the Texas Rangers who also took over the homicide investigation.” (Berenice Garcia, “Two Former Starr County Investigators Arrested,” *The Monitor*, 10/5/16)

### **The Homicide Investigation Stemmed From The Shooting Deaths Of His Wife And Her Friend In March 2016.**

“An investigator who was questioned in connection with missing cash from the Starr County Sheriff’s Office has been terminated, according to Starr County Attorney Victor Canales. Officials with the Starr County Sheriff’s Office last week terminated Osdy Luna, 35, who most recently had been on leave following the shooting death of his wife and her friend in late March, according to multiple sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak on the matter. The Starr County Sheriff’s Office confirmed Luna’s termination in a message sent to *The Monitor*. ‘Osdy was released Monday May 9,’ Sheriff’s spokesman Maj. Carlos Delgado said.” (Lorenzo Zazueta-Castro, “Starr Sheriff’s Office Investigator Terminated,” *The Brownsville Herald*, 5/16/16)

**Luna Was Terminated In May 2016 Over Missing Money From The Sheriff’s Office.** “An investigator who was questioned in connection with missing cash from the Starr County Sheriff’s Office has been terminated, according to Starr County Attorney Victor Canales. Officials with the Starr County Sheriff’s Office last week terminated Osdy Luna, 35, who most recently had been on leave following the shooting death of his wife and her friend in late March, according to multiple sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak on the matter. The Starr County Sheriff’s Office confirmed Luna’s termination in a message sent to *The Monitor*. ‘Osdy was released Monday May 9,’ Sheriff’s spokesman Maj. Carlos Delgado said.” (Lorenzo Zazueta-Castro, “Starr Sheriff’s Office Investigator Terminated,” *The Brownsville Herald*, 5/16/16)

### **In 2014, Fuentes’ Deputy Amy Reyes Was Arrested On Federal Drug Smuggling Charges**

**In 2014, Starr County Sheriff’s Deputy Amy Reyes Was Arrested By U.S. Border Patrol After Agents Seized 24 Marijuana Bundles From A Car She Was Riding In With Her Brother.** “Texas Border Sheriff’s Deputy Amy Reyes is facing federal drug smuggling charges following her recent arrest at a U.S. Border Patrol checkpoint

just north of Laredo, Texas where agents claim they found drugs in her vehicle. Reyes' arrest marks the most recent stain to the image of Texas border law enforcement which has been trying to clean up its image following a long history of [Breitbart](#). According to court records obtained by Breitbart Texas, Amy Reyes was a deputy with the Starr County Sheriff's Office when she was riding in a personal vehicle driven by her brother Bobby Reyes and they came up to the U.S. Border Patrol Checkpoint in Hebbronville. A police dog tipped off the agents toward a suspicious area under the seat in Reyes' car and during a secondary inspection they found two secret compartments. Out of the compartments federal agents seized 24 marijuana bundles weighing more than 75 pounds." (Ildfonso Ortiz, "Drug Arrest Of Texas Border Sheriff's Deputy Highlights Region's [Breitbart](#), 11/24/14)

**Under Questioning, Reyes Admitted She Was Going To Be Paid \$1,000 For Moving Drugs From Rio Grande City To Houston.** "During questioning by agents with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Reyes said that she was going to be paid \$1,000 to move the drugs from Rio Grande City to Houston." (Ildfonso Ortiz, "Drug Arrest Of Texas Border Sheriff's Deputy Highlights Region's [Breitbart](#), 11/24/14)

### **In 2013, Fuentes' Captain Pleaded Guilty To Bribery Charges Tied To The Gulf Cartel**

**In 2013, Romeo Javier "RJ" Ramirez, Fuentes' Captain "Pleaded Guilty To Bribery Charges For Having Take Money From The Gulf Cartel In Exchange For Law Enforcement Sensitive Information."** "In addition to Reyes, Starr County has seen its share of corrupt cops in 2013 Romeo Javier 'RJ' Ramirez, a Sheriff's captain who was in charge of the jail division pleaded guilty to bribery charges for having taken money from the Gulf Cartel in exchange for law enforcement sensitive information." (Ildfonso Ortiz, "Drug Arrest Of Texas Border Sheriff's Deputy Highlights Region's [Breitbart](#), 11/24/14)

### **In 2013, Starr County Sheriff Captain Was Charged For Accepting Thousands In Bribes For Aiding Drug Smugglers**

**In September 2013, Former Starr County Sheriff's Captain Romeo Javier Ramirez Was Sentenced To A Year And One Day In Prison For Helping Protect Drug Dealers And Their Smuggling Routes.** "A former South Texas sheriff's deputy has been sentenced to a year and a day in prison for helping protect drug dealers and their smuggling routes. The Monitor in McAllen reports a federal judge in Houston sentenced 41-year-old former Starr County sheriff's Capt. Romeo Javier Ramirez." ("Former Starr County Captain Gets Prison For Helping Drug Traffickers," [Action 4 News](#), 9/25/13)

**Ramirez Admitted To Accepting \$30,000 In Bribes From Drug Dealers.** "The former Starr County Sheriff's Office captain in charge of the county jail awaits sentencing after he admitted to accepting \$30,000 in bribes in exchange for turning over law enforcement information to drug smugglers. Romeo Javier Ramirez Jr., 41, quietly turned himself in to federal authorities in Houston last month, where he pleaded guilty to one count of the Hobbs Act, a federal law that prohibits public officials from accepting bribes, court records show." (Jared Taylor, "Former Starr County Sheriff's Captain Admits To Taking Bribes," *The Monitor*, 4/11/13)

**Ramirez Accepted The Bribes Between January 2006 And September 2008.** "Ramirez admitted to accepting \$30,000 in bribes from drug smugglers between January 2006 and September 2008, according to superseding criminal information unsealed following his arrest March 12." (Jared Taylor, "Former Starr County Sheriff's Captain Admits To Taking Bribes," *The Monitor*, 4/11/13)

**Ramirez Had Been In Charge Of The Jail Division In The Sheriff's Office And Resigned Amid The Investigation.** "Ramirez, who was sentenced Monday, formerly was in charge of the jail division of the Starr County Sheriff's Office. He resigned amid the investigation." ("Former Starr County Captain Gets Prison For Helping Drug Traffickers," [Action 4 News](#), 9/25/13)

### **In 2012, Two Of Fuentes' Deputies Indicted For Federal Bribery And Extortion Charges**

**In 2012, Two Of Fuentes' Deputies, Jason Munsell And Nazario Solis, Were Indicted For Bribery, Extortion And Gun Charges.** "A second Starr County sheriff's deputy involved in a federal bribery and extortion case turned himself in Tuesday, the sheriff confirmed. Deputy Jason Munsell, 26, who worked in the sheriff's

interdiction unit, is the second unnamed deputy in the six-count indictment against Nazario Solis, who was arrested Thursday, Sheriff Rene Fuentes said. The indictment includes bribery, extortion and drug charges.” (Gail Burkhart, “Sheriff: 2nd Starr Deputy In Extortion Case Turns Himself In,” *The Monitor*, 7/19/12)

**The Deputies Had Received More Than \$10,000 In Cash And Valuables To Protect An Illegal Gambling Operation.** “Federal investigators say Solis and the unnamed deputy, who Fuentes confirmed is Munsell, accepted bribes of more than \$10,000 worth of cash and valuables to protect an illegal gambling operation.” (Gail Burkhart, “Sheriff: 2nd Starr Deputy In Extortion Case Turns Himself In,” *The Monitor*, 7/19/12)

**“The Two Deputies Allegedly Split A \$1,500 Bribe To Warn The Owner Of The Eight-Liner Gambling Machines, Or Maquinitas, Of An Impending Raid In Late March 2011, According To The Federal Indictment.”** (Gail Burkhart, “Sheriff: 2nd Starr Deputy In Extortion Case Turns Himself In,” *The Monitor*, 7/19/12)

- **“The Warning Allowed The Casino Owner To Remove Money And Workers From The Location Before Authorities Raided It, The Indictment States.”** (Gail Burkhart, “Sheriff: 2nd Starr Deputy In Extortion Case Turns Himself In,” *The Monitor*, 7/19/12)

**Deputy Solis Also Faced Two Counts Of Possession With The Intent To Distribute Marijuana And For An Attempt To Trade Guns For Cocaine.** “Solis also faces two counts of possession with the intent to distribute less than 50 kilograms of marijuana and additional drug charge for an attempt to trade guns for cocaine. Solis is set to appear before U.S. Magistrate Judge Dorina Ramos at a detention hearing Wednesday.” (Gail Burkhart, “Sheriff: 2nd Starr Deputy In Extortion Case Turns Himself In,” *The Monitor*, 7/19/12)

**Solis Was Working For A Boss Of Mexico’s Gulf Cartel.** “Just a year prior, 34-year-old Nazario Solis, a sheriff’s deputy was arrested for working for a Gulf Cartel boss in Mexico by trying to find assault rifles and helping his drug shipments. Solis was also tied to bribery charges for tipping off underground casinos about upcoming raids allowing them to move their operation beforehand.” (Ildefonso Ortiz, “Drug Arrest Of Texas Border Sheriff’s Deputy Highlights Region’s [Breitbart](#), 11/24/14)

### **In 2011, An Investigator In Fuentes’ Office Was Suspended For Poaching Deer In A County Vehicle**


**In 2011, Starr County Sheriff Investigator Javier Pena Was Suspended For Poaching Deer In An Unmarked County Vehicle.** “The Starr County sheriff suspended one of his investigators who was arrested for poaching deer using an unmarked county vehicle Sunday night. Wardens with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department arrested Investigator Javier Peña and three others for hunting deer alongside the road at night. Hunting at night is illegal and is considered poaching, said Capt. Fernando Cervantes of the Parks and Wildlife Department. Cervantes did not release the names of the four people, but Capt. Larry Fuentes of the Sheriff’s Office confirmed Peña had been arrested and suspended. Fuentes said Peña had been booked in the Starr County Jail, but made bail. Peña has been with the Sheriff’s Office for about 10 years, Fuentes said.” (Gail Burkhardt, “Starr County Sheriff’s Investigator Suspended Over Night Hunt,” *The Monitor*, 11/29/11)

**Pena Was Sentenced To One Year Of Probation And 30 Days Of House Arrest.** “A Starr County sheriff’s deputy was sentenced to one year of probation Thursday for hunting deer illegally while on the job. Javier Peña was sentenced one year of probation and 30 days of house arrest more than three years after he was arrested, Starr County Attorney Victor Canales said.” (Lorenzo Zazueta-Castro, “Ex-Deputy Sentenced To Probation For Illegal Hunting,” *The Monitor*, 3/6/15)

## **MISMANAGEMENT**

### **Missing Funds**

**In 2016, Fuentes’ Sheriff’s Office Asked The Texas Rangers To Investigate A Theft Of \$6,000 In Cash From His Office.** “The Starr County Sheriff’s Office command staff met Tuesday with Texas Rangers in connection with an investigation into the theft of money from the office. The Starr County Sheriff’s Office approached the county attorney’s office to ask for help in investigating money that went missing some time last year, department



spokesman Maj. Carlos Delgado said. ... Delgado said in December the sheriff's office reached out to the county attorney's office for help in locating money that went missing from inside the sheriff's office. The money, more than \$6,000 in cash, was reported missing sometime in mid-September, at which point sheriff's officials asked for assistance from the Texas Department of Public Safety but were turned down and told to handle the matter internally, Delgado said." (Lorenzo Zazueta-Castro, "Money Missing At Sheriff's Office, Texas Rangers To Investigate," *The Brownsville Herald*, 1/12/16)

**Deputy Osdy Luna Was Questioned Over The Missing Funds.** "An investigator who was questioned in connection with missing cash from the Starr County Sheriff's Office has been terminated, according to Starr County Attorney Victor Canales. Officials with the Starr County Sheriff's Office last week terminated Osdy Luna, 35, who most recently had been on leave following the shooting death of his wife and her friend in late March, according to multiple sources who spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak on the matter. The Starr County Sheriff's Office confirmed Luna's termination in a message sent to The Monitor. 'Osdy was released Monday May 9,' Sheriff's spokesman Maj. Carlos Delgado said." (Lorenzo Zazueta-Castro, "Starr Sheriff's Office Investigator Terminated," *The Brownsville Herald*, 5/16/16)

## *Security Breach At Jail*

### **In October 2020, Several Employees, Including A High-Ranking Official Of The Starr County Sheriff's Office Were Fired Over A Security Breach At The Jail**

**In October 2020, Several Employees Of The Starr County Sheriff's Office Were Fired Over A Potential Security Breach At The Jail.** "The Starr County Sheriff's Office announced Monday that it fired several employees, including a high-ranking official, related to a potential security breach at the jail in late October. 'On October 29, 2020 Starr County Jail administration responded to a potential security breach stemming from a facility damage possibly caused by one or more jail inmates,' the sheriff's office said on Facebook. According to the agency, the jail administration is following inspection and reporting protocols and says the Starr County Sheriff's Office, the district attorney's office and the U.S. Marshals Service are investigating." ("Starr County Sheriff's Office Investigating Security Breach At Jail," *The Monitor*, 11/17/20)

# FAMILY'S LEGAL ISSUES

## RENE FUENTES JR.

### **In 2023, Fuentes' Son Pleaded Guilty To Protecting A Cocaine Shipment In Exchange For Cash In An Ongoing Legal Case**

**In July 2023, Rene Fuentes Jr., Fuentes' Son, Pleaded Guilty To Protecting A Cocaine Shipment In Exchange For Cash.** “The son of Starr County’s top lawman pleaded guilty to a federal drug trafficking charge on Thursday. During a hearing on Thursday afternoon, Rene Fuentes Jr., 41, of Mission admitted to protecting a cocaine shipment in exchange for cash. ‘Guilty, judge,’ Rene Fuentes Jr. said, when asked how he pleaded.” (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**In A 2019 FBI Sting Operation, Fuentes Jr. Accepted Payment From “Undercover FBI Assets” To Escort A Car Loaded With About 57 Pounds Of Cocaine From Starr County To Hidalgo County.** “Rene Fuentes Jr. resurfaced in 2019, when the FBI conducted a sting operation in Starr County. In May 2019, ‘undercover FBI assets’ paid Fuentes and two other people to protect a cocaine shipment, Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Laurence Guerra Jr. said Thursday afternoon, when Fuentes pleaded guilty. They escorted a car loaded with about 57 pounds of cocaine from Starr County to Hidalgo County. Prosecutors, however, didn’t take the case against Rene Fuentes Jr. to a grand jury until June 2021, more than two years after the incident.” (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**“Sentencing Is Scheduled For Oct. 4. Rene Fuentes Jr. Faces 5 To 40 Years In Federal Prison.”** (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

### **In 2006, Fuentes Jr. Pleaded Guilty And Was Sentenced To 23 Months In A Federal Prison For Purchasing Guns Under False Pretenses**

**Around 2006, Fuentes Jr. Was Fired By The Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office After He Was Found By Federal Agents Buying Guns Under False Pretenses.** “In 2005, though, Rene Fuentes Jr. accepted a job with the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office, which placed him on patrol. His star-studded job application listed Hidalgo County Precinct 3 Commissioner Joe Flores and Rio Grande City school district police Chief Byron ‘Dutch’ Piper as references. Just a year later, the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office fired Rene Fuentes Jr. after federal agents caught him buying guns under false pretenses. Agents with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives provided Hidalgo County with a summary of the federal investigation.” (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**According To A Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Memo, The Guns Purchased By Fuentes Were Expensive And Were Commonly Used By Mexican Drug Traffickers.** “‘The type of guns purchased by Fuentes are very expensive guns and which, in their experience, are commonly used by Mexican drug traffickers,’ according to a memo released by the Hidalgo County Sheriff’s Office.” (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**“In Some Cases, Rene Fuentes Jr. Paid Other People To Purchase Guns For Him — What Federal Agents Call ‘Straw Purchasing.’”** (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**“The ATF Also Determined That Rene Fuentes Jr. Filled Out Federal Forms With Personal Information That Belonged To Other People.”** (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

**In A Plea Deal, Fuentes Jr. Pleaded Guilty To Making A False Statement To A Firearms Dealer And Was Sentenced To 23 Months In Federal Prison.** “Rene Fuentes Jr. struck a deal with prosecutors and pleaded guilty to making a false statement to a firearms dealer. U.S. District Judge Ricardo H. Hinojosa sentenced him to 23 months in federal prison.” (Dave Hendricks, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Pleads Guilty To Federal Drug Trafficking Charge,” [Valley Central News](#), 7/20/23)

## **Rene Fuentes Jr. Lists The Same Address As His Fuentes Sr.**

**According To Nexis Public Records, Fuentes Jr. Has The Same Address As His Father, Rene Fuentes Sr.** (Nexis Public Records, Accessed 9/13/23)

|                   |
|-------------------|
| <b>Name</b>       |
| Fuentes, Rene Jr. |
| <b>LexID(sm)</b>  |
| 0075-2293-1245    |

## **ROBERTO JUAN “ROBBY” FUENTES**

### **In 2013, Fuentes’ Son, Roberto Juan “Robby” Fuentes Was Arrested For Aggravated Assault After He Assaulted His Common-Law Wife**

**In September 2013, Fuentes’ Son, Roberto Juan “Robby” Fuentes Was Arrested On An Aggravated Assault Charge.** “Police arrested the son of the Starr County sheriff on an aggravated assault charge. Roberto Juan ‘Robby’ Fuentes turned himself in Wednesday afternoon to authorities at the Rio Grande City municipal building, where he was arraigned and had his bond set at \$15,000, police records show. Fuentes was taken to the Starr County Jail for booking.” (Ildefonso Ortiz, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Accused Of Assaulting Wife,” *The Brownsville Herald*, 9/11/13)

**According To Records, Roberto Fuentes Assaulted His Common-Law Wife.** “The charges stem from a weekend incident in which the 26-year-old Fuentes is accused of assaulting his common-law wife, police court records show. The woman went to the police station Monday morning to speak with investigators and press charges.” (Ildefonso Ortiz, “Starr County Sheriff’s Son Accused Of Assaulting Wife,” *The Brownsville Herald*, 9/11/13)