

LGBTQ Judge Banned for Life After Shocking Misconduct Case

In a courtroom, a judge holds the power. Orders are followed. Authority is rarely questioned.

For Rosie Speedlin Gonzalez, that authority appeared absolute until one moment exposed its limits and triggered a chain reaction she could not control. What followed was not a routine disciplinary issue. It became a criminal case.

She first took the bench in 2018, when she was elected as the first openly gay judge in Bexar County, a detail that drew national attention at the time.

It happened during a Dec. 2024 hearing. What began as a disagreement between the judge and a defense attorney escalated rapidly.

Then came the order that changed everything.

“Take her into custody and put her in the (jury) box,” the judge told a bailiff, according to courtroom transcripts cited by the San Antonio Express-News.

Moments later, the record states: “Ms. Russell is placed in handcuffs.”



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A defense attorney was physically detained inside a courtroom. That decision crossed a legal line.

A grand jury indicted Speedlin Gonzalez on charges of unlawful

restraint and official oppression after the incident, according to reporting from KSAT.

The felony charge alone carried the possibility of significant prison time.

She was arrested, booked into jail and suspended without pay. The courtroom she once controlled was no longer hers.

The incident did not stand alone. Complaints had already been mounting over her conduct, including allegations of unprofessional and abusive behavior tied to her time on the bench.

The handcuffing incident became the breaking point, but the case never reached a jury.

Instead, a deal was struck.

Speedlin Gonzalez agreed to resign and accept a lifetime ban from ever serving as a judge in Texas. In exchange, prosecutors dropped the charges, calling it “in the interest of justice.”

No conviction. No trial. No prison sentence.

There is no question she lost her position, her authority and her future on the bench. But the outcome leaves a hard reality.

A sitting judge ordered someone handcuffed in her courtroom, faced felony charges and ultimately avoided a criminal conviction.

The system removed her. It did not fully punish her. At one point during the confrontation, she declared she had full control over her courtroom.

For a time, that was true until one decision proved otherwise.

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