



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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MEXICAN WOMAN LIABLE FOR CASHING DECEASED MAN'S SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS

PHOENIX – Norma Zanabria, 53, of Mexico but formerly living in Phoenix, was found liable in United States District Court in Phoenix for violating the False Claims Act. Ramon Galarza, a tenant who lived at a Phoenix home owned by Zanabria, received monthly Social Security checks but passed away in October 1997. The Social Security Administration, unaware of his death, continued to mail checks to his residence.

The United States alleged that for approximately 10 years after Mr. Galarza passed away, Zanabria cashed a total of \$61,846 from his Social Security checks. The United States sued Zanabria under the False Claims Act, seeking triple the amount of damages as allowed under the act. On May 8, 2008, a default judgment was entered against Zanabria for a total of \$185,538. Zanabria pleaded guilty to illegal re-entry after deportation on August 3, 2007 and is currently serving a two-year sentence in federal prison in California.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General and U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CV-08-00142-PHX-LOA
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