



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04/22/08

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EIGHT DEFENDANTS INDICTED IN FAKE I-D DOCUMENT CONSPIRACY

Illegal Immigrants Manufactured & Sold Fake Social Security Cards, Green Cards & Driver's Licenses

Atlanta, GA-- Eight illegal immigrants have been indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of conspiring to unlawfully manufacture and possess fraudulent identification documents, including Social Security cards, permanent resident cards, and driver's licenses and identification cards from multiple states, and to encourage and induce aliens to reside in the United States in violation of the law. Five of the defendants were also charged with aggravated identity theft.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "We are committed to upholding the integrity of federal and state-issued identification documents, and we will vigorously enforce the laws against those who counterfeit such documents for sale to individuals who may use them to commit additional crimes. Federal agencies will also continue to pursue those who steal and misuse Social Security numbers and other personal identifying information, as such identity theft may cause great harm to victims."

United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Special Agent In Charge, Kenneth Smith said, "This case is an example of ICE's aggressive efforts to protect America's borders and arrest those who would penetrate them illegally and who would obtain fraudulent documents in order to stay here. This is especially true of an operation such as that taken down today, which allegedly operated as a multi-level criminal enterprise to perpetrate fraud on all those who come in contact with its customers."

The defendants charged with conspiracy in the indictment are: FRANCISCO SANTILLAN ARELLANO, 36, GABRIEL GARCIA SANCHEZ, 24, LUIS AGUILAR ROMERO, 29, JOSE LUIS PLATA SILVA, 52, JOSE RODRIGUEZ RODRIGUEZ, 43, FRANCISCO HERNANDEZ LOPEZ, 24, GIOVANNY TREJO GOMEZ, 22, and CESAR VAZQUEZ-VENTURA, 38, of Gwinnett, DeKalb, Clayton and Cobb Counties. SANTILLAN ARELLANO, GARCIA SANCHEZ, AGUILAR ROMERO, TREJO GOMEZ, and VAZQUEZ VENTURA are also charged with aggravated identity theft. SANTILLAN ARELLANO was also charged with being an alien in possession of a firearm.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the charges and other information presented in court: The fraudulent identification documents that the defendants allegedly conspired to manufacture and sell included Social Security cards, permanent resident cards, and state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards. The defendants allegedly manufactured the fraudulent documents at several apartments in the Atlanta area, using computers, laminating equipment, card stock, and other equipment and supplies. In a number of document purchases arranged by law enforcement authorities, the defendants allegedly sold fraudulent documents to confidential informants and an undercover investigator. In many cases, the fraudulent documents contained Social Security numbers and alien registration numbers that had been issued to other individuals. Over 70 fraudulent documents identified in the indictment that were connected with the fraudulent document manufacture and sales operation contained personal identifying information belonging to real persons.

SANTILLAN ARELLANO, TREJO GOMEZ, and AGUILAR ROMERO, GARCIA SANCHEZ, and VAZQUEZ VENTURA were charged with aggravated identity theft, a law that imposes a mandatory, consecutive two years to any qualifying criminal sentence when the defendant uses a real person's identity. The recent enactment of this law demonstrates the seriousness with which Congress views identity theft, and the great harm it can cause to those victims whose identity is stolen.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment contains only allegations. A defendant is presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove a defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and officers from the Cobb County Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Teresa D. Hoyt and Special Assistant United States Attorney Nancy Weiss are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404)

581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.