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FORMER IRS EMPLOYEE ARRESTED TODAY FOR ID THEFT CONSPIRACY: \$1.2 MILLION ATTEMPTED FRAUD, 160 VICTIMS

FRESNO, Calif. — Former IRS employee Viririana Hernandez, 30, was arrested this morning at her mother's home in Parlier, charged with an identity theft conspiracy that used information stolen from the files of other IRS employees, United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner announced.

Co-defendants Roberto Martinez, 33, and Lilliana Gonzalez, 32, both of Fresno, were also arrested at their residence this morning. All three defendants were arraigned today and entered pleas of not guilty. Martinez was released from custody with electronic monitoring. Hernandez and Gonzalez remain in custody and have a detention hearing on Thursday, July 24, 2014. Arraignment for a fourth defendant, Daniel Miranda, 25, has not yet been scheduled.

On July 18, 2014, a federal grand jury in Fresno returned a 23-count indictment, charging the defendants with conspiracy, bank and wire fraud, and aggravated identity theft. Miranda was also charged with mail fraud.

According to the indictment, from June 2012 to January 2014, the four conspirators obtained personal information from victims through various methods. Hernandez worked for the IRS since 2006 and had access to the personal information of IRS workers. Several of the victims are current or former IRS workers. Without the victims' permission, they opened credit card accounts in the victims' names or added themselves as "authorized users" of the victims' existing accounts. The conspirators then used the accounts to buy goods and services at locations throughout the Fresno area, as well as in Modesto and Riverside County. In total, it is alleged that the four conspirators misused the personal information of approximately 160 victims and attempted fraudulent credit card charges of more than \$1.2 million.

San Francisco Division Inspector in Charge Rafael Nunez of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service stated: "We are working closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office and our partners in law enforcement to arrest and prosecute those responsible for using mail delivery for a fraud scheme."

Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration San Francisco Field Division Special Agent-in-Charge Rod Ammari stated: "Identity theft is a nationwide crisis that places a heavy burden on the victim and creates chaos in the victims' lives. When an IRS employee is involved in stealing information through their employment at the IRS and

facilitating identity theft rings, it will not be tolerated and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration will use all its power and resources to ensure these criminals are brought to justice.”

This case is the product of an investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, and the Fresno Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Michael G. Tierney is prosecuting the case.

If the defendants are convicted, they each face a maximum statutory penalty of 30 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Any sentence, however, would be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory sentencing factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables.

The charges are only allegations; the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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