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ILLEGAL ALIEN CHARGED WITH PRODUCING FRAUDULENT U.S. IMMIGRATION AND IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS IN FRESNO

FRESNO, Calif. - United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that a federal grand jury returned a nine-count indictment charging JOSE MANUEL GUARDADO (aka Manuel Guardado), 37, of Mexico, with possession, transfer, production, and sale of fraudulent United States immigration and social security identification documents in Fresno, California, and for eluding examination by immigration officers. GUARDADO is scheduled to appear in court before United States Magistrate Judge Dennis L. Beck on October 30, 2009, at 1:30 p.m.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Ian Garriques and Susan Phan, who are prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that between May 2009 and October 15, 2009, GUARDADO possessed, transferred, produced, and sold fraudulent immigration and identification documents including United States social security cards and alien registration receipt cards (commonly known as "green cards").

According to documents filed in court, GUARDADO, an illegal alien, would meet prospective purchasers in public locations, take their pictures and biographical details, return to his own residence to produce the documents, and then provide the purchasers with the fraudulent documents. ICE agents executed a federal search warrant at GUARDADO's residence on October 15, 2009, and uncovered alleged fraudulent document-making items, implements, and supplies.

"Anyone who knowingly sells phony identity cards is putting the security of our communities and even our country at risk," said Brian Poulsen, resident agent in charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Fresno. "Counterfeit documents can potentially be used by dangerous criminals and others who are attempting to obscure their identities and cover their tracks."

If convicted, GUARDADO faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

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

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