



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

John E. Murphy, Acting U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SECOND GUILTY PLEA ENTERED IN SECOND PHASE OF
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES TICKET SCHEME INVESTIGATION**

John E. Murphy, Acting United States Attorney, announced that in San Antonio today, 40-year-old Luis Vasquez, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud in connection with the Southwest Airline ticket scheme investigation.

Appearing before United States Magistrate Judge John Primomo, Vasquez admitted to participating in a ticket distribution scheme with former Southwest Airlines employee Althea Jackson and her husband, James Jackson. The Jacksons were sentenced to 30 months in federal prison on May 8, 2008, and ordered to pay approximately \$800,000 restitution.

Althea Jackson, while employed as an administrative assistant in the executive offices of Southwest Airlines, obtained approximately 5,600 "Green Passes" or Southwest Airlines Non Revenue Must Ride (NRMR) tickets from the ticketing department. These "Green Passes" were supposed to be used for the purpose of thanking Southwest passengers who assisted flight crews in the performance of their in-flight duties, including rendering aid to passengers who sustained injuries or became ill while onboard a Southwest Airlines flight. Rather than following established Airline protocol and mailing NRMR tickets along with a letter of appreciation to deserving passengers, Althea Jackson fraudulently obtained these NRMR tickets and kept them for her own purposes.

In furtherance of the scheme, Jackson solicited Vasquez and others to sell the NRMR tickets at prices ranging from \$120 - \$200 or more. Vasquez admitted to obtaining 219 NRMR tickets from Althea Jackson and reselling them causing an actual loss to Southwest Airlines of \$43,800.

Vasquez faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Eight co-defendants remain under indictment charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Trial is scheduled for August 17, 2009, before United States District Judge Orlando Garcia.

This case is being investigated by the United States Secret Service sponsored South Texas Regional Task Force and is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorneys Bill Baumann, David Counts and Thomas Moore.

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