



Department of Justice

Office of the United States Attorney Western District of Wisconsin

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CONTACT: RITA M. RUMBELOW
PHONE: (608) 264-5158
TTY: (608) 264-5006

WOMAN SENTENCED FOR BANK FRAUD

Madison, Wis. - Stephen P. Sinnott, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Virginia Martinez Castillo, 21, a citizen of Honduras, was sentenced yesterday by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to four months in prison for bank fraud. Castillo pleaded guilty to this charge on August 19, 2009.

On March 16, 2009, a group of individuals, including Castillo and co-defendant Julio Benitez Zamorano, entered the First National Bank of River Falls, River Falls, Wis. The individuals approached tellers and presented fraudulent (stolen) checks drawn on the account of St. Croix Custom Fabrication, Inc. The checks cashed by Castillo and Zamorano were made payable to "Ismael Vazquez" and "Rebeca Silva" and they provided false identification in those names. Prior to cashing the checks, the bank teller required Castillo and Zamorano to place their fingerprints on the checks.

Castillo and co-defendant Zamorano were subsequently arrested in Albert Lea, Minn., on March 23, 2009, after they tried to cash more stolen checks at a local bank. Castillo and Zamorano were fingerprinted after their arrests and their fingerprints matched the fingerprints on the checks that were cashed at the First National Bank of River Falls.

Castillo's four-month sentence reflects the fact that she cooperated extensively with law enforcement officers by helping identify other members of the group involved in the stolen check cashing scheme. Co-defendant Zamorano's sentencing hearing is scheduled for October 28 at 12:40 p.m. Three other individuals were charged in a separate indictment and they will be arraigned on October 22, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

The charges against Castillo were the result of an investigation conducted by the Plover Police Department, River Falls Police Department, New Richmond Police Department, and Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rita M. Rumbelow.

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