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6/25/2026

THOMAS G. BRUTON
CLERK, U.S. DISTRICT COURT

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION

1:26-cr-00338

Judge John Robert Blakey
Magistrate Judge Laura K. McNally
RANDOM/Cat. 4

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

ALEXANDER INIGUEZ MERCADO

UNDER SEAL

Violation: Title 18, United States Code,
Section 1519

The SPECIAL JANUARY 2026 GRAND JURY charges:

1. At times material to this indictment:

a. Signal was a free messaging application that stored users' messages locally on the users' electronic devices and provided for end-to-end encryption of communications. Uninstalling the Signal application on a user's electronic device would delete the user's Signal messages that were stored within the application on the device.

b. Defendant ALEXANDER INIGUEZ MERCADO was a resident of Chicago, Illinois. Defendant MERCADO was the owner and user of Cellular Telephone 1. Defendant MERCADO was also the user of a Signal account, which defendant accessed using Cellular Telephone 1.

c. The Federal Bureau of Investigation was a federal law enforcement agency housed within the U.S. Department of Justice, with responsibilities that included domestic intelligence and law enforcement investigations.

d. The Federal Bureau of Investigation was conducting an investigation of individuals located in multiple states who used Signal accounts to communicate with each other regarding, among other things, the planning of a violent attack targeting an Ultimate Fighting Championship (“UFC”) event that was scheduled to take place at or near 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, otherwise known as the White House, in Washington, D.C., on June 14, 2026 (the “UFC Event”), as well as the attendees of the event.

e. As part of its investigation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation obtained information that defendant MERCADO was a member and an administrator of certain Signal messaging groups that included members who appeared to communicate with others regarding the planned UFC Event attack.

f. On or about June 13, 2026, a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation spoke by telephone with defendant MERCADO, who was using Cellular Telephone 1, and informed defendant that the agent was calling to discuss threats made online regarding the UFC Event and asked defendant whether he planned to travel to Washington, D.C., to help with an attack. Defendant denied those plans, advised the agent that he did not want to meet with the agent, and, after a brief conversation, the call was disconnected.

g. On or about June 14, 2026, after the call with defendant MERCADO disconnected, the Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent attempted to contact defendant on Cellular Telephone 1 to set up an interview with defendant, but defendant did not initially respond.

2. Between on or about June 13, 2026, and June 14, 2026, in the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division,

ALEXANDER INIGUEZ MERCADO,

defendant herein, with the intent to impede, obstruct, and influence an investigation and proper administration of a matter within the jurisdiction of a department and agency of the United States, namely, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and in relation to and contemplation of such investigation, did knowingly alter, destroy, and conceal a record and tangible object, namely, electronic data on Cellular Telephone 1 relating to defendant's Signal account by uninstalling the Signal application on said electronic device;

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1519.

A TRUE BILL:

FOREPERSON

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY