UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

NORBERTO PENA BRITO,
a/k/a "Real"
WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS,
NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES,
PAULA ABAD DIAZ,
a/k/a "Mayi,"
MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ,
a/k/a "Marlin Perez,"
ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ,
LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ,
JOEL ABAD BELEN,
LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO,
TOMAS LORENZO JOSE,
YEREMY LORENZO JOSE,
JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and
EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA,

Defendants.

SEALED INDICTMENT

26 Cr.

26 CRIM 216

OVERVIEW

1. Beginning in or around June 2024, NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, and others known and unknown, participated in a vehicle theft organization (the "VTO"), which fraudulently sold vehicles stolen from victims in New York City to unsuspecting buyers in the State of New York and elsewhere.

2. The defendants and other members of the VTO perpetrated their scheme by acquiring vehicles that had been stolen from victims in New York City, then obscuring the fact that those vehicles had been stolen, and, ultimately, selling them to unsuspecting buyers in New York and elsewhere. The defendants effectively laundered these stolen cars in a variety of ways, including by "retagging" the stolen vehicles by covering their true, public VINs[1] with new, fraudulent VINs and by covering or replacing their federal certification labels[2] with labels containing the new, fraudulent VINs; creating fraudulent titles for the stolen vehicles; taking the stolen vehicles for oil changes and inspections to generate new, fraudulent histories for those vehicles; and advertising the stolen vehicles on a social media marketplace. Through these methods, the members of the VTO, and others, were able to obtain stolen vehicles and resell them for a huge profit.

3. As part of the scheme, the defendants and other members of the VTO sold at least approximately 100 stolen vehicles to unsuspecting buyers. The total value of these stolen vehicles exceeded approximately \$3.5 million, and the proceeds that the defendants and other members of the VTO fraudulently obtained from the unsuspecting buyers of these stolen vehicles exceeded approximately \$1.8 million.

[1] A "VIN," or vehicle identification number, is a unique 17-character code for a specific vehicle. Modern vehicles have a primary, "public" VIN located on the driver's-side dashboard, where the dashboard meets the windshield.

[2] A "federal certification label" is an adhesive label, typically located on a vehicle's driver's side door jamb, which certifies that the vehicle meets federal safety standards. The sticker includes the vehicle's VIN.

COUNT ONE
(Conspiracy to Possess and Sell Stolen Vehicles)

The Grand Jury charges:

4. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 3 of this Indictment are repeated, realleged, and incorporated as if fully set forth herein.

5. From at least in or about June 2024 through in or about May 2026, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed together and with each other to commit an offense against the United States, to wit, the receipt, possession, and sale of stolen vehicles, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2313.

6. It was a part and object of the conspiracy that NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, and others known and unknown, would and did intentionally and knowingly receive, possess, conceal, store, barter, sell, and dispose of stolen motor vehicles, which stolen motor vehicles had crossed a State boundary after being stolen, knowing the same to be stolen, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2313, to wit,

knowing the vehicles to be stolen, PENA BRITO, MARTINEZ VARGAS, SOLANO COMPRES, ABAD DIAZ, SEGURA MARTINEZ, HEREDIA PEREZ, VARGAS SANCHEZ, ABAD BELEN, BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, MELENCIANO COLON, and PEREZ ESTRELLA agreed to and did sell multiple stolen vehicles in states other than the states in which they were stolen.

Overt Acts

7. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect the illegal object thereof, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere:

a. On or about June 13, 2024, MARTINEZ VARGAS activated a phone number that would be used to communicate with unsuspecting buyers of stolen vehicles.

b. On or about July 25, 2024, PENA BRITO, who had been released that same day from New York State prison after serving a sentence following his conviction for his participation in a stolen car ring similar to the one described herein, sent a group text message to SOLANO COMPRES, ABAD DIAZ, SEGURA MARTINEZ, HEREDIA PEREZ, and VARGAS SANCHEZ, which, in sum and substance, stated that the group would resume business, *i.e.*, their criminal car theft scheme, the next day, and that the group would make up for what had been lost during PENA BRITO's time in prison.

c. On or about September 28, 2024, ABAD BELEN sold a stolen vehicle in Connecticut. The vehicle had been stolen on or about September 20, 2024, in Queens, New York.

d. On or about November 16, 2024, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE sold a stolen vehicle in Connecticut. The vehicle had been stolen on or about October 31, 2024, in Queens, New York.

e. On or about April 27, 2025, PEREZ ESTRELLA sold a stolen vehicle in the Bronx, New York. The vehicle had been stolen on or about April 4, 2025, in the Bronx, New York.

f. On or about May 1, 2025, BRITO CAMPUSANO sold a stolen vehicle in the Bronx, New York. The vehicle had been stolen on or about April 23, 2025, in the Bronx, New York.

g. On or about May 13, 2025, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE sold a stolen vehicle in Yonkers, New York. The vehicle had been stolen on or about April 30, 2025, in Queens, New York.

h. On or about September 5, 2025, MELENCIANO COLON sold a stolen vehicle in the Bronx, New York. The vehicle had been stolen on or about September 2, 2025, in Queens, New York.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.)

COUNT TWO
(Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud)

The Grand Jury further charges:

8. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 3 and 7 of this Indictment are repeated, realleged, and incorporated as if fully set forth herein.

9. From at least in or about June 2024 through in or about May 2026, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and

EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly combined, conspired, confederated, and agreed together and with each other to commit wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

10. It was a part and an object of the conspiracy that NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, and others known and unknown, knowingly having devised and intending to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud, and for obtaining money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, would and did transmit and cause to be transmitted by means of wire, radio, and television communication in interstate and foreign commerce, writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343, to wit, PENA BRITO, MARTINEZ VARGAS, SOLANO COMPRES, ABAD DIAZ, SEGURA MARTINEZ, HEREDIA PEREZ, VARGAS SANCHEZ, ABAD BELEN, BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, MELENCIANO COLON, and PEREZ ESTRELLA agreed to make, and caused to be made, false statements to multiple vehicle purchasers in order to obtain payments in exchange for stolen vehicles, and sent and received, and caused others to send and receive, electronic communications to and from the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, in furtherance of that scheme.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349.)

COUNT THREE
(Wire Fraud)

The Grand Jury further charges:

11. The allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 3 and 7 of this Indictment are repeated, realleged, and incorporated as if fully set forth herein.

12. From at least in or about June 2024 through in or about May 2026, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, knowingly having devised and intending to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud, and for obtaining money and property by means of false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, transmitted and caused to be transmitted by means of wire, radio, and television communication in interstate and foreign commerce, writings, signs, signals, pictures, and sounds, for the purpose of executing such scheme and artifice, to wit, PENA BRITO, MARTINEZ VARGAS, SOLANO COMPRES, ABAD DIAZ, SEGURA MARTINEZ, HEREDIA PEREZ, VARGAS SANCHEZ, ABAD BELEN, BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, MELENCIANO COLON, and PEREZ ESTRELLA engaged in a scheme to make false statements to multiple vehicle purchasers in order to fraudulently obtain payments in exchange for stolen vehicles, and sent and received, and caused others to send and receive, electronic communications to and from the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, in furtherance of that scheme.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 2.)

FORFEITURE ALLEGATIONS

13. As a result of committing the offense alleged in Count One of this Indictment, NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 982(a)(5), any and all property, real or personal, which represents or is traceable to the gross proceeds obtained, directly or indirectly, from the commission of said offenses, including but not limited to a sum of money in United States currency representing the amount of gross proceeds traceable to the commission of said offenses.

14. As a result of committing the offenses alleged in Counts Two and Three of this Indictment, NORBERTO PENA BRITO, a/k/a "Real," WILKINS MARTINEZ VARGAS, NOEMI SOLANO COMPRES, PAULA ABAD DIAZ, a/k/a "Mayi," MARLIN SEGURA MARTINEZ, a/k/a "Marlin Perez," ANGEL HEREDIA PEREZ, LUIS VARGAS SANCHEZ, JOEL ABAD BELEN, LUIS BRITO CAMPUSANO, TOMAS LORENZO JOSE, YEREMY LORENZO JOSE, JHOLKIS MELENCIANO COLON, and EDUARDO PEREZ ESTRELLA, the defendants, shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), any and all property, real and personal, that constitutes or is derived from proceeds traceable to the commission of said offenses, including but not limited to a sum of money in United States currency representing the amount of proceeds traceable to the commission of said offenses.

15. If any of the above-described forfeitable property, as a result of any act or omission of the defendants:

a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;

b. has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third person;

c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Court;

d. has been substantially diminished in value; or

e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be subdivided without difficulty;

it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 853(p), and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c), to seek forfeiture of any other property of the defendants up to the value of the above forfeitable property.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 981 and 982;
Title 21, United States Code, Section 853; and
Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461.)

[redacted] 5/27/26
FOREPERSON

Jay Clayton
JAY CLAYTON
United States Attorney