

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	:	Hon.
	:	
v.	:	Crim. No.
	:	
MERLINHG ALCANTARA,	:	18 U.S.C. § 371, 472 and 2
a/k/a, "Melvin Alcantara"	:	
	:	<u>INDICTMENT</u>
	:	

The Grand Jury in and for the District of New Jersey, sitting in Newark, charges:

COUNT 1 - CONSPIRACY

BACKGROUND

A. The Coconspirators

1. At all times relevant to this Indictment, unless otherwise indicated:

a. Defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA: Defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA resided in Essex County, New Jersey and subsequently moved to Northampton County, Pennsylvania.

b. L.A.: L.A., who is named as a coconspirator but not as a defendant herein, was the brother of defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA, resided in Essex and Hudson Counties, New Jersey and subsequently moved to the Dominican Republic, but continued to make regular contact with defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA, Kenneth Robinson, Alex Torres, J.C. and others.

c. Kenneth Robinson and Alex Torres: Kenneth Robinson and Alex Torres, who are named as coconspirators but not as defendants herein, were residents of Union County, New Jersey and employed as baggage handlers by an airline company at Newark Liberty International Airport in Elizabeth, New Jersey. As airline employees, Robinson and Torres were responsible for loading and unloading passenger luggage, mail parcels and miscellaneous cargo from airplanes.

d. J.C.: J.C., who is named as a coconspirator but not as a defendant herein, was a resident of Mercer County, New Jersey.

B. United States Treasury Checks

2. At all times relevant to this Indictment:

a. United States Treasury checks contained numerous authentication features, including, but not limited to:

- i. “U.S. TREASURY” security watermarks;
- ii. Ultraviolet security florescent fibers randomly incorporated into the checks’ fibers;
- iii. Dry offset printing;
- iv. “USA USA ...” microprinting as the endorsement line on the back of the checks; and
- v. Images of the Department of Treasury seal, text reading “FMS,” and the official seal of the United States viewable only with an ultraviolet light.

b. The United States Treasury used the United States Postal Service to deliver United States Treasury checks. The United States Postal Service used commercial airlines, such as the airlines that Kenneth Robinson and Alex Torres worked for, to transport mail throughout the United States.

THE CONSPIRACY

3. From in or about June 2003 to on or about November 15, 2007, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere, defendant

MERLINHG ALCANTARA,
a/k/a, "Melvin Alcantara"

did knowingly and willfully conspire and agree with L.A., Kenneth Robinson, Alex Torres, J.C., and others to commit offenses against the United States, that is:

- a. to steal, take and abstract mail, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 1708; and
- b. to pass, utter, publish and sell, with intent to defraud, falsely made, forged, counterfeited and altered obligations and other securities of the United States, contrary to Title 18, United States Code, Section 472.

THE OBJECT OF THE CONSPIRACY

4. The object of the conspiracy was for defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA and his coconspirators to enrich themselves by stealing United States Treasury checks from mail shipped as cargo on airplanes at Newark International Airport, creating counterfeit checks using the information from the United States Treasury checks, and negotiating those counterfeit checks at various banks.

THE MANNER AND MEANS OF THE CONSPIRACY

5. It was part of the conspiracy that from in or about June 2003 to on or about November 15, 2007, L.A. recruited baggage handlers at Newark International Airport (the "Baggage Handlers") to steal checks, including United States Treasury tax refund checks, from mail being shipped as cargo on commercial airlines.

6. It was further part of the conspiracy that Kenneth Robinson, Alex Torres, and other Baggage Handlers, in the course of carrying out their responsibilities of unloading luggage and miscellaneous cargo from commercial airline flights, stole United States Treasury checks being delivered through the mail using the United States Postal Service.

7. It was further part of the conspiracy that the Baggage Handlers used backpacks, clothing and other means to conceal the stolen mail and United States Treasury checks and remove them from the airport.

8. It was further part of the conspiracy that when airport security conducted random inspections of Baggage Handlers and their storage lockers, the Baggage Handlers notified each other in an effort to avoid detection.

9. It was further part of the conspiracy that the Baggage Handlers delivered the checks to defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA or L.A. in return for a promise of cash or other financial benefit.

10. It was further part of the conspiracy that L.A. created and caused to be created counterfeit Treasury checks using the check number, routing number, account number and exact amount of the legitimate United States Treasury checks, changing only the name and address of the payee.

11. It was further part of the conspiracy that the counterfeit United States Treasury checks L.A. created and caused to be created included a number of features designed to appear as legitimate authentication features, including: (a) printing "U.S. Treasury" on the check in an attempt to copy the watermark; (b) using ultraviolet florescent fibers in making the check paper; (c) using offset lithography; (d) microprinting the endorsement line; and (e) simulating a UV image on the checks.

12. It was further part of the conspiracy that defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA and L.A. caused the counterfeit United States Treasury checks to be delivered to J.C. and others (the "Counterfeit Check Handlers").

13. It was further part of the conspiracy that the Counterfeit Check Handlers negotiated the counterfeit United States Treasury checks at various banks.

14. It was further part of the conspiracy that, as a result of the scheme, defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA, L.A., Kenneth Robinson, Alex Torres, J.C., and others stole over \$1,000,000 in legitimate United States Treasury checks and created counterfeit checks using information extracted from these legitimate checks.

OVERT ACTS

15. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect its unlawful object, defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA and his coconspirators committed and caused to be committed the following overt acts in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere:

a. On or about November 5, 2004, J.C. deposited a counterfeit check, purported to be United States Treasury check number 2306 58757078, payable to J.C. in the amount of approximately \$58,717.09, into an account at a branch of Washington Mutual Bank in North Bergen, New Jersey.

b. On or about November 9, 2004, J.C. deposited a counterfeit check, purported to be United States Treasury check number 2306 58829565, payable to J.C. in the amount of approximately \$9,728.00, into an account at a branch of Washington Mutual Bank in Elmwood Park, New Jersey.

c. On or about November 12, 2004, J.C. deposited a counterfeit check, purported to be United States Treasury check number 2306 58843822, payable to J.C. in the amount of approximately \$14,144.42, into an account at a branch of Washington Mutual Bank in Elmwood Park, New Jersey.

d. On or about November 7, 2007, defendant MERLINHG ALCANTARA telephoned Alex Torres to discuss Torres' ability to provide more stolen checks.

e. On or about November 8, 2007, L.A. telephone Alex Torres to discuss Torres' friend at the airport who could steal United States Treasury checks.

f. On or about November 9, 2007, L.A. agreed to pay Alex Torres \$5,000 for the stolen United States Treasury checks.

g. On or about November 14, 2007, L.A. and Alex Torres agreed that MERLINHG ALCANTARA would meet Alex Torres on November 15, 2007 in Newark at a designated location where they had met on prior occasions to deliver stolen checks in exchange for payment (the "Designated Location").

h. On or about November 15, 2007, MERLINHG ALCANTARA met Alex Torres at the Designated Location and provided him \$1,100 in cash as partial payment for the delivery of United States Treasury checks, as previously discussed.

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.

COUNTS 2 THROUGH 4 - COUNTERFEIT OBLIGATIONS

1. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4-14 of Count One of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated as though set forth in full herein.

2. On or about the dates listed below, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere, defendant

MERLINHG ALCANTARA,
a/k/a, "Melvin Alcantara"

did knowingly, willfully and with intent to defraud, pass, utter, publish and sell, and attempt to pass, utter, publish and sell, falsely made, forged, counterfeited and altered obligations and other securities of the United States, as identified below, each constituting a separate count of this Indictment:

Count	Date of Deposit	Date of Check	Amount	Check Number	Fictitious Payee
2	01/10/05	09/24/04	\$46,915.00	2306 58757085	Juan Castillo 4 Market Street Paterson, NJ 07524
3	01/21/05	09/24/04	\$340,184.27	2306 58757368	Juan Castillo 256 Kearney Avenue Kearney, New Jersey 07032
4	10/25/04	09/24/04	\$19,496.00	2306 58836448	Juan Castillo 4 Market Street Paterson, NJ 07524

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 472 and Section 2.

COUNTS 5 THROUGH 14 - COUNTERFEIT OBLIGATIONS

1. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4-14 of Count One of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated as though set forth in full herein.

2. On or about November 15, 2007, in the District of New Jersey and elsewhere, defendant

MERLINHG ALCANTARA,
a/k/a, "Melvin Alcantara"

did knowingly, willfully and with intent to defraud, pass, utter, publish and sell, and attempt to pass, utter, publish and sell, falsely made, forged, counterfeited and altered obligations and other securities of the United States, as identified below, each constituting a separate count of this Indictment:

Count	Date	Amount	Check Number	Fictitious Payee
5	10/18/06	\$17,512.00	3510 31769314	Ramon & Maria Flores 2691 Kenney Boulevard Jersey City, NJ 07306
6	10/18/06	\$8,000.42	3510 31769315	Rosanna Navarro 1521 Center Avenue Fort Lee, NJ 07024
7	10/18/06	\$12,412.00	3510 31769316	Hector & Mary Hernandez 50 Walnut Street Elizabeth, NJ 07201
8	10/18/06	\$19,125.62	3510 31769317	Frank Rodriguez 220 Western Avenue Morristown, NJ 07960
9	10/18/06	\$14,550.88	3510 31769318	Luis & Luz Perez 3 Bartha Avenue Edison, NJ 08837
10	10/18/06	\$5,750.12	3510 31769319	Santos Gomez 403 Montgomery Street Jersey City, NJ 07306
11	10/18/06	\$10,020.50	3510 31769320	Antonio J. Polanco 121 77th Street North Bergen, NJ 07047

Count	Date	Amount	Check Number	Fictitious Payee
12	10/18/06	\$14,550.35	3510 31769321	Joseph Carrasco 2772 Van Houten Avenue Clifton, NJ 07013
13	10/18/06	\$5,120.00	3510 31769322	Marta Ruiz 14 West Blackwell Street Dover, NJ 07801
14	10/18/06	\$7,219.00	3510 31769323	Brian Garcia 6101 Boulevard E West New York, NJ 07093

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 472 and Section 2.

A TRUE BILL

FOREPERSON

CHRISTOPHER J. CHRISTIE
United States Attorney