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Tuesday, July 8, 2014

Mexican Pair Pleads Guilty To Debit/Credit Card Conspiracy In \$35K McAllen Shopping Spree

McALLEN, Texas – Mary Carmen Vaquera-Garcia, 27, and Daniel Dominguez-Guardiola, 28, both of Mexico, have entered guilty pleas to conspiring to use debit/credit cards with the intent to defraud, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth Magidson.

Vaquera and Dominguez admitted today that on Jan. 12, 2014, they went on a \$35K+ shopping spree in McAllen using unauthorized Lone Star National Bank Visa card accounts. The pair intended to sell the fraudulently-purchased merchandise in Mexico for a profit. Vaquera further admitted to wiring money overseas to obtain stolen account information for the cards and to hiring Dominuez to help her use the cards.

The magnetic strips on the fake cards had been encoded with stolen, real account information for other people's accounts that the defendants were not authorized to use. The names on the front of the fake cards were associated with false male and female identities that the defendants were using. Therefore, a retailer simply checking the name on an ID against the front of the card might not have been able to detect the fraud.

Vaquera-Garcia and Dominguez-Guardiola were arrested on Jan. 19, 2014, on several outstanding warrants as they attempted to re-enter the U.S. through the Anzalduas Port of Entry. A total of 96 counterfeit cards were found hidden in Dominguez's waistband.

As part of their plea agreements, the defendants agreed to pay restitution and forfeiture in the amount of \$35,422.21 and to forfeit several items that were seized from them on the day of their arrest, including hundreds of dollars in currency and gift cards.

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Chief U.S. District Judge Ricardo H. Hinojosa, who accepted the guilty pleas, has set sentencing for Sept. 24, 2014. At that time, each defendant faces up to 10 years in federal prison and a possible \$250,000 maximum fine. They will remain in custody pending that hearing.

This case was investigated by the Secret Service with the assistance of the McAllen Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher Sully is prosecuting.

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