

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2019

<https://oig.ssa.gov>

New York Widow with Dual Identity Arrested for Disability Fraud

The Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, Gail S. Ennis, is announcing the arrest of Maria Rios, also known as “Maria Padro,” for filing a false claim to receive more than \$101,000 in Social Security retirement and disability benefits. The Social Security Office of the Inspector General (OIG), working with the United States Secret Service, executed a Federal arrest warrant issued in the Eastern District of New York, on charges that Rios defrauded Social Security by making false statements and concealing material facts to collect Social Security benefits under dual identities.

Based on a referral from the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Investigation Division, we began a joint investigation, and found evidence that Maria Rios had a second identity under a second Social Security number. According to the criminal complaint filed in this case, Rios received Social Security disability benefits under the identity Maria Padro from 1994 to 2016. Every year from 2002 to 2012, she was working under her own identity and concealing earnings from the Social Security Administration that made her ineligible for those benefits.

The complaint further alleges that Rios applied for and received Social Security retirement benefits from 2015 to 2018 in her own identity, having failed to disclose that she was already receiving disability benefits under another identity. As Padro, she then applied for and received survivors benefits as a widow from 2016 to 2019, while still receiving disability benefits. The evidence indicates, in all, Rios received \$101,489 in Social Security benefits she was not eligible to receive.

Special Agent Neisha Samaroo investigated this case under the supervision of Resident Agent-in-Charge Angel Rodriguez, in the Social Security OIG’s New York Field Division, which is led by Special Agent-in-Charge John Grasso. Special Assistant U. S. Attorney Virginia Nguyen of the Eastern District of New York is prosecuting this matter.

After her arrest, Rios was arraigned in U.S. District Court and released on a \$100,000 Security Bond. Her next court appearance has not been scheduled. The details contained in the complaint document are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Inspector General Ennis thanked the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles Investigation Division for its investigative efforts, the United States Secret Service for its assistance, and the United States Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of New York, for its support of this investigation.

Inspector General Ennis encourages the public to report suspected fraud to the Social Security Fraud Hotline. Please visit <https://oig.ssa.gov> to learn about the types of fraud we investigate and to report suspected fraud.

Please direct press inquiries to (410) 965-2671, and visit <https://oig.ssa.gov> for more information.