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News Releases

NOVEMBER 17, 2010 SAN JUAN, PR

2 women nabbed by ICE in impersonation, harboring case

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - Genova Navarro, 46, of San Juan, and Dianne Racity, 44, of Port St. Lucie, Fla., were arrested on Tuesday by special agents with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) for conspiracy to impersonate a federal officer, aiding and abetting, and harboring illegal aliens.

The 10-count indictment that led to the arrest of Navarro and Racity, also charged Alicia Domench-Van Rhyn, 50, with additional charges of conspiracy to impersonate a federal officer, aiding and abetting, and harboring illegal aliens. Domench-Van Rhyn was arrested by ICE HSI special agents on a criminal complaint on Oct. 20 on charges of impersonating a federal officer and harboring.

According to the indictment, Van-Rhyn, Navarro and Racity, would falsely represent to their clients, who were either legal permanent residents or illegal aliens, that they were federal immigration officers, employees or federal immigration judges, and that by virtue of their positions could expedite their respective application process and obtain special immigration benefits for them and their family members. They would induce these clients to pay substantial sums of money, ranging in amounts from \$5,000 to \$18,000, knowing full well that none of them held any official position in the federal judiciary, United States government, or any of its dependent agencies, and that the defendants would not assist these clients with their immigration needs.

"Among the various schemes and artifices being used by some unscrupulous persons are offers to provide immigration services, including ways to avoid the established channels for adjusting one's immigration status, offers to provide false and forged identity documents, even threats and false impersonation of immigration officials," said Tere Silva, resident agent in charge of the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) in San Juan. "When these schemes are uncovered, the perpetrators will be investigated, arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

"These defendants took advantage of their victims by charging them substantial fees for services which they were not authorized or capable of providing. We will use every resource available to make certain that violations of this sort result in the maximum prison term available," said U.S. Attorney Rosa Emilia Rodríguez Vélez.

If convicted, the defendants could face up to 20 years in prison.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Evelyn Canals and Teresa Zapata.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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