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Wednesday, March 27, 2019

Illegal Alien Sentenced to Prison for Using Another Person's Social Security Number

Use of False Name Enabled Spouse to Fraudulently Obtain Welfare Benefits

A Guatemalan man who used another person's name and social security number to get jobs was sentenced today to six months in federal prison.

Melvin Rodriguez-Barrios, age 44, a citizen of Guatemala illegally present in the United States and residing in Clarion, Iowa, received the prison term after a January 2, 2019, bench trial finding him guilty of three counts of unlawful use of an identification document and four counts of misuse of a social security number.

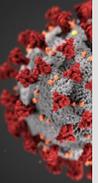
The evidence at trial showed that on May 23, 2014, August 21, 2014, June 24, 2015, and January 5, 2016, Rodriguez-Barrios, using an alias name, used a social security card bearing someone else's name and social security number on employment and tax documents when applying for work at various businesses in Clarion and Forest City, Iowa. Rodriguez-Barrios also used a fraudulent Missouri State ID card to prove his stolen identity and falsely claimed to be a United States citizen when applying for work.

Rodriguez-Barrios had been a fugitive from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) since he was ordered deported from the United States in August 2011. Rodriguez-Barrios first used the alias name and false identification documents when applying for work in Clarion in March 2012. Rodriguez-Barrios came to the attention of immigration officials during the course of an employment documents audit at a business in Clarion in November 2017. Information obtained during the audit showed Rodriguez-Barrios, an illegal alien, was working under an alias and used someone else's social security number to obtain work.



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Further investigation revealed that Rodriguez-Barrios' wife, Cleotilde Puac-Gomez, also an illegal alien, was collecting food stamps and other state welfare benefits by not disclosing Rodriguez-Barrios' income earned under the stolen identity. The failure to report Rodriguez-Barrios' income resulted in Puac-Gomez receiving over \$19,900 in over-payments in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds and Medicaid benefits between June 2012 and November 30, 2017. Puac-Gomez, age 46, has pled guilty to theft of government funds and is awaiting sentencing.

Rodriguez-Barrios was sentenced in Cedar Rapids by United States District Court Judge C. J. Williams. Rodriguez-Barrios was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He must also serve a three-year term of supervised release after the prison term. There is no parole in the federal system.

Rodriguez-Barrios is being held in the United States Marshal's custody until he can be transported to a federal prison.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel C. Tvedt and investigated by the Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, and the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals Investigation Division - Economic Fraud Control Bureau.

Court file information at <https://ecf.iand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.pl>.

The case file number is 18-CR-3045.

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Topic(s):
Identity Theft
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Component(s):
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